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O F T H E L I F E O F J E S U S

An Appraisal of its Truth and Significance

by

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at

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FOREWORD

To submit a thesis on Albert Schweitzer at the present time may seem ~~rather~~ superfluous. During the past year, three new books dealing with him have appeared. One, Prophet in the Wilderness, by Herman Hagedorn, tells the story of his life in a popular way. Another, Albert Schweitzer: the Man and his Mind, by George Seaver, aims at being a definitive biography. And the third, Albert Schweitzer, an Anthology, edited by Charles R. Joy, gives the more important excerpts from his works. But none of these deals directly with the subject of this thesis, which aims not to present the story of his life, nor yet to understand the genius of his original thought - he himself does this in My Life and Thought, and so have others - but to study one phase of his work, his eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus, and to come to conclusions about its validity and value. So far as the writer can discover, nobody has ever attempted the exhaustive treatment which it deserves. This is not to say, of course, that no scholar has ever reached a judgment on Schweitzer's work. The opposite is the case. No really thorough scholar since his time dares to discuss the life of Jesus without taking into account the eschatological theory. But most are content to do so with a passing reference or at most a few pages on the subject. This thesis has no theory of its own to put forward, but gives its undivided attention to Schweitzer's views and their consequences. This is the original contribution it seeks to make to human knowledge.

If at times it has been found necessary to disagree with Dr. Schweitzer's views, no disrespect is intended to the great personality

who is such an outstanding example of Christian self-sacrifice. It will be remembered, however, that the Paris Missionary Society, when it authorized him to go to Lambaréné, extracted from him the promise to be silent about his views on the life of Jesus, because it believed them to be mistaken and dangerous. His service has been achieved in spite of, rather than because of, the theories with which this thesis deals.

The writer wishes to acknowledge his debt to many who have made this study possible: first of all, to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry D. Rodgers, who brought him up in a Christian home, and have supported him with their interest, prayers, and financial assistance in all his studies; to the Rev. J. Frederick Fitchen, jr., minister of the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Albany, N.Y., of which the writer became a member during his formative years, and the Rev. Harry J. Swan, director of religious education in the church, who first pointed the writer toward the gospel ministry; to Professor William Lee of Albany College, Oregon, and the Rev. Mortimer M. Stocker, then pastor of the First Presbyterian Church there, who were used of God to help the writer realize and accept his call to the ministry; to the president and faculty of the San Francisco Theological Seminary, who gave him his theological training, and especially to the Rev. Dr. Edward A. Wicher, professor of New Testament, who gave him his interest in New Testament studies; to Principal William A. Curtis of New College, who suggested the subject of the present thesis and helped to lay the foundation for it, to Professors William Manson and James S. Stewart, who served as supervisors during its preparation and offered valuable suggestions; to Dr. Albert Schweitzer, whose original theories have proved a most

interesting and rewarding subject of study, and the many theological writers, some of whose works are quoted, who have helped the writer to reach his conclusions; and finally, to the writer's wife, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Rodgers, without whose patience, encouragement, and assistance the work could never have been brought to a successful conclusion.

British readers are asked to forgive any Americanisms of spelling, expression, and the like, which may have slipped into the thesis due to the writer's American background.

Edinburgh, May, 1948.

Henry A. Rodgers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DR. ALBERT SCHWEITZER'S
ESCHATOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION
OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

Chapter One

SCHWEITZER'S POSITION

1. Sketch of his life.

To say that Albert Schweitzer is the most interesting, or the most versatile, or the most disturbing figure in the theological world of recent times would probably be an over-statement. Nevertheless, his works do combine the qualities of interest, versatility, and paradox to a surprising degree. They have enjoyed a popularity seldom accorded to such learned studies, some of them having been published in as many as six different languages. They cover a wide range of subjects, including music, philosophy, New Testament criticism, medicine, missions, and autobiography.[1] They show a forceful thinking and an earnest search for truth, even when, as in the case of his work on the life of Jesus, he feels constrained to contradict the accepted views of Christendom as a whole. Small wonder, then, that they should have provoked a host of replies in the form of magazine articles, books, and even this thesis, whose purpose it shall be, not only to understand and explain, but also to appraise the truth and permanent value of "Dr. Albert Schweitzer's Eschatological Interpretation of the Life of Jesus."

Only an unusual man could produce such an array of works. That Dr. Schweitzer is an unusual man the study of his life will show. He

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1. A complete list of Schweitzer's works, including translations, is given in the Bibliography at the end of the thesis.

has given an intimate account of it in his autobiography: My Life and Thought. As the title indicates, he not only relates the many events of his crowded life, but also sketches out the trains of his thought, and explains how he arrived at the conclusions expressed in his books. It would be superfluous to go into all the details here, since he has so carefully set them forth. Let the following résumé suffice for the purposes of this thesis:

Albert Schweitzer was born on January 14, 1875, the son of Louis Schweitzer, then pastor of the Evangelical Congregation at Kaysersberg in Upper Alsace, and of Adele Schillinger Schweitzer, herself a daughter of the manse. Shortly after his birth, the family moved to Günsbach, where his father remained as pastor until his death in 1925. Here the boy grew up in a pious Christian home, attending the village school, and showing a prodigious musical ability in the piano and organ lessons which his father gave him. In the year 1884-1885, he attended the Realschule at Münster, but then, through the generosity of his god-father, he was able to continue his education at the Gymnasium at Mülhausen (now Mulhouse), and to study organ with Eugène Münch. After graduation in 1893, he went to Paris for organ lessons from Charles-Marie Widor, and thence to the University of Strassburg.

Here he devoted himself to philosophy and theology. His professor of New Testament was the great Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, whom he admired very much, but with whom he soon found himself differing. This is the story as Schweitzer himself tells it:

> "On April 1st, 1894, I began my year of military service, but the kindness of my captain, Krull by name, made it possible for me, during the periods of regular routine, to be at the University by eleven o'clock almost every day, . . .
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> "When in the autumn we went on manoeuvres in the neighbour-

hood of Hochfelden (Lower Alsace), I put my Greek Testament in my haversack. I may explain that at the beginning of the winter term those theological students who wished to compete for a scholarship had to pass an examination. . . . I chose the Synoptic Gospels. . . . . Being then so robust that I did not know what fatigue was, I was able to get through some real work in the evenings and on the rest-days. During the summer I had gone through Holtzmann's commentary. Now I wanted to get a knowledge of the text, and see how much I remembered of his commentary and his lectures. This had for me a remarkable result. Holtzmann had gained recognition in scientific circles for the Marcan hypothesis, that is, the theory that Mark's Gospel is the oldest, and that its plan underlies those of Matthew and Luke. That seemed to justify the conclusion that the activities of Jesus can be understood from Mark's Gospel only. By this conclusion I felt, to my astonishment, sorely puzzled when on a certain rest-day which we spent in the village of Guggenheim, I concentrated on the tenth and eleventh chapters of Matthew, and became conscious of the significance of what is narrated in these two chapters by him alone, and not by Mark as well. . . . .

"Thus was I, at the end of my first year at the University, landed in perplexity about the explanation then accepted as historically correct of the words and actions of Jesus when He sent out the disciples on their mission, and as a consequence of this about the wider question of the conception of the whole life of Jesus which was then regarded as history. When I reached home after the manoeuvres entirely new horizons had opened themselves to me. Of this I was certain: that Jesus had announced no kingdom that was to be founded and realized in the natural world by Himself and the believers, but one that was to be expected as coming with the almost immediate dawn of a supernatural age."[1]

This incident was the beginning of the eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus. As he continued his studies he spent more and more time upon his researches in this direction. He received a fresh impetus when, at the end of his University course, he presented himself for the first theological examination, and was given as subject for the candidates' thesis: "Schleiermacher's teaching about the Last Supper compared with the conceptions of it embodied in the New Testament and the Confessions of Faith drawn up by the Reformers." As he read Schleiermacher's Dogmatics on the subject, he was struck by the remark that in Mark and Matthew there is no command on Jesus' part to

1. My Life and Thought, English edition, pp.16-20, abridged.

repeat the celebration of the meal. Why, then, did the disciples celebrate it? Here was another problem which demanded attention.

He passed the first theological examination on May 6, 1898, and was awarded the Goll scholarship of 1200 marks (about £ 60) per year for six years, on condition that he should by the end of that time take the degree of Licentiate in Theology at Strassburg, or repay the money received. If the life of Jesus had been his first interest, philosophy had been a close second. He now determined to take first his Doctorate in Philosophy, and chose as the subject of his study "Kant's Philosophy of Religion". Accordingly, he spent the winter of 1898-1899 in Paris, where he carried on his research and also attended some lectures at the Protestant theological faculty. He continued the organ lessons with Widor which he had begun in 1893. The following summer he went to Berlin, where he met Harnack and many other leading personages of the time. He received his Ph.D. degree from Strassburg in July, 1899.

He would have liked to go next to England, but decided to finish his work for the Licentiate as soon as possible, so that another needy student might have the scholarship. He therefore remained at Strassburg, where he became assistant at St. Nicholas' church (after passing his second examination in July, 1900, he was made a curate), and returned to the studies of the life of Jesus which had attracted so much of his attention during his University course. The problem of the Last Supper, especially, pressed for solution. He planned a three-fold treatise, the first part to deal with "The Problem of the Last Supper on the basis of the scientific research of the 19th century and the historical records", the second to establish the underlying conceptions in the life and

thought of Jesus which led Him to celebrate it with his disciples on the evening before His death, and the third to trace the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the primitive-Christian and early Christian periods, and to show how the Roman mass and the Greek (Orthodox) mystery developed from it naturally and necessarily.[1] The first part of the work alone was sufficient to earn him the Licentiate degree on July 21, 1900. The second, which became a "Sketch of the Life of Jesus", appeared with the first in 1901, and won for its author the post of Privat-Dozent at the University. The third part was never published as originally planned, although it was developed in the form of lecture notes, as was also a similar history of the sacrament of baptism, and a discussion of the relations of the Johannine doctrines to the Synoptic and the Pauline, but none of this material found its way into print until 1930, when it was incorporated into The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle.[2]

The years which followed are typical of the prodigious volume and variety of Schweitzer's work. Besides his duties as curate at the church and as lecturer at the University, he found time during the vacations to visit his home at Günsbach, or his friend and teacher Widor in Paris. In 1903 he was elected Principal of the theological college, and held this post in addition to the other two. Besides all this, he had as early as 1896 come to the conclusion that he owed God a debt of service for all the benefits and privileges he had enjoyed, and now he began experimenting with various social service projects, without much success. One afternoon, as he was glancing

1. See the preface to Das Abendmahlsproblem, p. xii.

2. See chapters XI and XIII.

through the Paris Missionary Society Journal, he came upon an appeal for a medical doctor for the mission station at Lambaréné in French Gabon (part of Equatorial Africa). This seemed to him a call from heaven, so in 1905 he embarked upon a course of medical studies. He resigned his principalship at the theological college, but continued as preacher and lecturer. Music, too, was making great demands on his time. He was in great demand as an organist, and used to play for all the concerts of the Paris Bach Society, and often for those of the Orfeo Catalá at Barcelona. Yet in spite of all these activities, the flow of books from his pen went on undiminished. He so distinguished himself by a book on Bach written in French, at Widor's suggestion, and published in 1905, that he had to undertake a German edition, which appeared in 1908. An Essay on German and French Organ-Building and Organ-Playing, contributed to the periodical Die Musik in 1906, led to his being called in by the Congress of the International Music Society at Vienna in 1909 to help draw up a set of International Regulations for Organ-Building. And just before he set out for Africa, he and Widor published the first five volumes of a new American edition of Bach's organ works.[1]

In the realm of New Testament criticism, he published in 1906 his epoch-making Quest of the Historical Jesus. It had originally been intended as an appendix to the Sketch of the Life of Jesus, dealing with the history of research into the life of Jesus, but had grown into a volume of 401 pages, whereas the original Sketch had only 109. A revised edition of the Quest which he brought out in 1913 contained 642 pages. His thesis for the medical doctorate, en-

1. See the complete list of Schweitzer's works in the Bibliography.

titled Die psychiatrische Beurteilung Jesu, shows that Jesus was not a paranoiac, but that His belief in His Messiahship and the necessity of the Passion were natural results of His eschatological beliefs.

From the "Life of Jesus" literature, Schweitzer now turned to the history of Pauline research (English title, Paul and His Interpreters), and then started work on The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, which, however, he was unable to bring to completion until just as he was arriving in Africa for the third time in 1930.

Finally, in 1912, after having overcome the opposition of supposedly Christian friends who did not want him to "throw himself away", and of the Paris Missionary Society, who felt that his unusual interpretation of the life of Jesus might be dangerous, he resigned his positions as preacher at St. Nicholas' church and as lecturer in New Testament at the University, and the following spring he set out with his bride, Helen Bresslau Schweitzer, a trained nurse, for a new chapter in an already full life.

He found being a jungle doctor fully as strenuous as his previous life had been. There had been no regular doctor at Lambaréné for so long that there was more disease than he could cope with, and no decent hospital equipment. Yet in spite of all this new work, he found time to keep up his organ-practising on a special piano with pedal attachment given him by the Paris Bach Society. A temporary respite came at the outbreak of the first World War, when, as German citizens, he and his wife were made prisoners of war by the French authorities, and not allowed to do medical work. Instead, however, of going on with his work on Pauline mysticism, he turned to the Philosophy of Civilisation, a subject which had been in his mind for years, and

which the war had brought to his attention anew. But his respite from medical work did not last long. Cases of imperative need had to be dealt with, and he was the only doctor for miles around. So they were soon hard at work again, until 1917, when, still prisoners, they were taken to concentration camps in France, and the following year exchanged and sent home to Strassburg in broken health and without any means of support.

Through friends he was able to obtain positions as doctor in a Strassburg hospital and curate at St. Nicholas' church, where he had preached so long before leaving for Africa. Lack of health and funds made it seem unlikely that he would ever be able to return to his missionary work. He retained his two posts after the war, and until 1921. When Alsace became French, he and his wife acquired French citizenship. But he was too great a man to be hid from the world for long. In 1919 he went to Barcelona to play for the Orfeo Catalá. In 1920, he was invited to give the Olaus-Petri lectures at the University of Uppsala in Sweden. While there, his health improved so much that he went on a lecture tour to raise money to pay the debts he had contracted for his mission work during the war. He was also persuaded to publish his missionary memoirs, under the title <u>On the Edge of the Primeval Forest</u>. The way had opened again for him: he could raise enough money by his lecture and concert tours and by his books to return to Africa and keep his work going there. During the next few years (1921-1923) he made several such tours, to Sweden, Denmark, England, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia. He was able to bring out the first two (out of a projected four) volumes on the Philosophy of Civilisation, which he had started in Africa, and to

publish his lectures on Christianity and the Religions of the World, delivered at Selly Oak College, Birmingham, and his Memoirs of Childhood and Youth.

In 1924, he was able to go back to Africa, without his wife and daughter. His old hospital was so ruined by neglect that it had to be completely rebuilt. Soon the number of his patients had increased so greatly that more doctors and a new hospital were needed. There was no time for writing during this period, except for letters and a few sketches of his work for its friends and supporters. These were collected, however, and published under the title Mitteilungen aus Lambarene[1]. The work of building up both staff and plant took until 1927, when Schweitzer was finally able to return to Europe, leaving a working organization to carry on in his absence.

The years 1928 and 1929 were spent in lecture and concert tours throughout Northern Europe. In 1928, he received from the city of Frankfurt the newly created Goethe prize for service to humanity. His writing at this time was confined to The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, the final chapters of which were finished on the boat back to Lambaréné. Mme. Schweitzer was well enough to accompany him on this voyage, but soon found the African climate too much for her, and had to return. Dr. Schweitzer wrote his autobiography in Lambaréné in 1931, and it was published the same year.[2] Later, he, too, returned to Europe. Among others he delivered the Hibbert Lectures for 1934 at Oxford and London, and the Gifford Lectures for 1934 and 1935 at

1. English title, More From the Primeval Forest; American edition, The Forest Hospital at Lambaréné.

2. My Life and Thought. This book is the source of most of the foregoing sketch of Schweitzer's life.

Edinburgh. In the latter year he published his treatise on Indian Thought and Its Development.

He went back to Africa a fourth time in 1937. Another book of African notes, From My African Notebook, appeared in 1939. In that same year, he had planned another visit to Europe. It was cut off, however, by the gathering clouds of war, and he returned to Africa almost immediately, taking time only to make arrangements for his family's safety. Mme. Schweitzer escaped from Alsace when the Germans invaded in 1940, and eventually managed to join her husband in Africa. Their daughter was married in Alsace in 1943. The Schweitzers remained in Lambaréné throughout the war, unmolested this time because they were now French citizens. Dr. Schweitzer has been working on the third, and final, volume of his Philosophy of Civilisation, to be entitled Reverence for Life. He hopes to publish it this summer (1948) when he returns to Europe.

2. Résumé of Schweitzer's position.*

a. Das Abendmahlsproblem.

The first of Schweitzer's theological works to be published was his two-fold treatise on the Last Supper.[1] His thoughts had first been centered upon the subject by his candidate's thesis for the first theological examination.[2] He went into it more fully for his L.Th. thesis, in which he came to the following conclusions:

The theologians of his day, and of the nineteenth century in

1. Das Abendmahl, of which the first part was Das Abendmahlsproblem, and the second Das Messianitäts- und Leidensgeheimnis: Eine Skizze des Lebens Jesu.

2. See above, pp. 3-4.

* Schweitzer's position is here stated without comment. It will be critically dealt with in later chapters.

general, had felt that there was a problem connected with the Last Supper, but had not got very far toward solving it, because they had been preoccupied with detailed questions. Schweitzer analyzes the situation, and finds that all the research varies in its results according as it gives more importance to the fact that Jesus took bread and wine and blessed them and gave them to the disciples, or to the fact that the disciples partook of the elements.

Following Calvin, the first group of interpreters[1] made the words, "This is my body, this is my blood" more important, interpreting them to mean that by partaking of the elements the communicants shared in the benefits of Christ's death. But they are so uncertain about the relation of the different problems which arise that they cannot be summed up any further.

The next group[2] lays the emphasis on the communion itself, as a remembrance of Jesus' last supper on earth. They leave the death of Jesus entirely out of consideration, since they do not think He knew exactly when or how it would come. Spitta made the greatest contribution by the suggestion that this was an anticipatory celebration of the Messianic meal.

Closely allied to these, but with secondary emphasis also on Jesus' words, "This is my body; this is my blood", are Harnack, Haupt, Schultzen, and Hoffman. They make the physical eating of the bread and wine a symbol of the spiritual nourishment of Christ. But the symbol is only valid when Christ Himself blessed the elements and

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1. De Wette, Ebrard, Rückert, in the first half of the nineteenth century; Keim, Weizsäcker, Beyschlag, Holtzmann, Lobstein, Schmiedel in the second half.

2. Strauss, Bauer, and Renan about 1850; Brandt, Spitta, and Eichhorn about 1890.

distributed them. There would be no point in repeating the ceremony unless Christ had specifically commanded it.

This command to repeat turns out to be an important factor in the discussion. The more emphasis is laid on the fact that Jesus distributed the elements as His body and His blood, the more necessary it becomes that He should have commanded the disciples to repeat it, for otherwise the ceremony would have no meaning in the early church. On the other hand, the more emphasis is laid on the conception of the Last Supper as a communal meal, the more likely it is that the disciples might have repeated it as a symbol of christian brotherhood, without any specific command on Jesus' part. Thus the relation of Jesus' original supper to the celebration of it by the early church depends on the emphasis. If the original meal was merely a communal one, then the Agape was identical with it, but then the words of Jesus have no significance whatever. On the other hand, the more emphasis is laid on Jesus' words, the less it is possible to explain how the early Christian celebration grew out of it.

The next attempts at solving the problem were those of P. W. Schmiedel and Jülicher. Schmiedel, by closely following the text, finds the words of Jesus most important, but cannot explain why the early Christians celebrated it at all. Jülicher pretends to do so, but the celebration he describes is not really that of the early church, which cannot be explained on his grounds.

Therefore, says Schweitzer, those who emphasize the fact that the disciples shared the elements can explain the sacrament of the early church, but not the meaning of the original Last Supper, while those who stress the symbolism of the broken bread and the outpoured

wine can explain the original significance, but not why the early church repeated the ceremony. Attempts to combine the two lose the one in proportion as they gain the other. So none of these conceptions can solve the riddle. An entirely new start must be made.

Schweitzer gets his new start by supposing that the order of events as related in the records is unimportant, and that Jesus spoke the "parable" of the body and the blood while the disciples were partaking of the elements, or even afterwards, but that it was recorded beforehand because the two events could not be written down simultaneously. Thus he supposes that the "parable" is to be explained from the Supper, rather than the Supper from the "parable."

He then turns to the five historical records of the Last Supper: Luke 22.14-20 (which he considers most original in its longer, double, form), Mark 14.22-26, Matthew 26.26-29, I Corinthians 11.23-26, and Justin I Apol. 66. After studying these from the point of view of the textual critic, he decides that they come from different traditions, and that each should be studied separately.

He takes Mark first, and points out that the bread is passed and eaten before Jesus says: "Take, eat: this is my body," and that the wine is passed and drunk before Jesus speaks of the "blood of the new testament which is shed for many", and that Jesus goes on immediately to express His expectation to drink it new with them in His Father's Kingdom. If this be the authentic account, then it should be the starting-point of the study. Schweitzer then goes on to show how each of the other records alters the story to make both parts, the passing of the bread and the passing of the wine, more similar. Matthew shows the assimilation started but not completed. Luke's

account shows extensive working over, apparently in the interests of making the part about the bread like the part about the wine. Justin, on the other hand, shortens the latter to agree with the former.

But that record is surely authentic, Schweitzer argues, which shows no influence of the communion service of later times. So the Marcan record must be the authentic one. For all the others were affected by the similar use of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper of the early church. Matthew's is not entirely assimilated, but the influence can be seen. Paul and Justin are seeking to explain, not the original act of Jesus, but the communion of the early church. Luke's is a literary product.

We have now a new approach to the problem in Mark's record. Jesus had the disciples eat and drink before He explained the symbolism. Therefore, reasons Schweitzer, the eating and drinking must have been the important thing, and not the explanation. He then finds his explanation in the thought of the coming celebration in the Father's Kingdom. In other words, the original Last Supper was intended as a proleptic celebration of the Messianic banquet. The disciples understood and commemorated it as such. Even Paul sees this connection: "Ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come." (I Cor. 11.26). Jesus is therefore speaking not only of His death, but also of the Messianic Kingdom soon to follow, when He has risen to glory. Thus eschatology enters into the understanding of the celebration, and helps to solve the problems.

b. The Mystery of the Kingdom of God.[1]

But before he can consider the problem properly solved, Schweitzer

1. This is the English title of the Sketch of the Life of Jesus, the second part of the two-fold Das Abendmahl treatise.

decides he must show the basis for it in the life and thoughts of Jesus Himself. So in this second volume of Das Abendmahl, he traces the eschatological background of the life of Jesus, as "historically" conceived. Just what he means by a "historical" life is explained in the first two paragraphs:

> "The Synoptical texts do not explain how the idea of the Passion forced itself upon Jesus, and what it meant to Him. The speeches of Peter and Paul viewed the Passion in the aspect of a divine necessity which was prophesied by the Scripture. The Pauline theory likewise has nothing to do with history.
>
> "Therefore the idea of the Passion as it is developed here in connection with an account of Jesus' life is not directly furnished by the texts, but it deduced from them by application. One is left here to the unavoidable necessity of formulating a theory, the truth of which can only be judged by the measure of clearness and order which it introduces into the synoptic accounts."[1]

But Schweitzer cannot concur in the theoretical reconstruction of history which was current in his time. He disagrees with four of its fundamental assumptions:

> "1. The life of Jesus falls into two contrasted epochs. The first was fortunate, the second brought disillusion and ill success."[2]

But He encountered many difficulties, including the plots of the Pharisees (Mk.3.6), the doubts of His family and friends as to His sanity (Mk.3.21), and the hostility of the people of Nazareth (Mk.6.5), during the first period, while the enthusiasm of the crowd at the Triumphal Entry (Mk.11.8-10) shows He had not failed in the second.

> "2. The form of the synoptical Passion-idea in Mark 10.45 (His giving Himself a ransom for many) and in the institution of the Lord's Supper (Mk.14.24: His blood for many) is somehow or other influenced by the Pauline theory of the atonement."[3]

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1. The Mystery of the Kingdom of God, hereinafter referred to as the Sketch, English edition, p. 59.

2. Sketch, p. 63, refuted on pp.64-69.

3. ibid., p. 63, refuted on pp.70-73.

But Paul's (and Luke's) "My body for you" (I Cor.11.24; Lk.22.19-20) referring to a definite group of Christians, is a later idea than Mark's and Matthew's "for many" (Mk.14.24; Mt.26.28), which Jesus undoubtedly used, lest the apostles think His self-sacrifice was for them alone.

> "3. The conception of the Kingdom of God as a self-fulfilling ethical society, in which service is the highest law, dominated the Passion."[1]

But Jesus' remark to James and John, who had asked for the chief seats in the Kingdom, that "whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister, and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all" (Mk.10.43-44), quite definitely enjoins present service in order to future greatness. "For the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mk.10.45), not as an example, but to fit Himself to be ruler of all when the Kingdom comes. Moreover, Schweitzer asserts, there was a close connection in Jesus' mind between the Passion and the future Kingdom. In the first period, when He expected a general tribulation, He urged His disciples to be loyal to the end, "for whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mk.8.38). Later on, each time the disciples strive about their relative positions in the Kingdom (Mk. 9.34, Mk.10.37), this follows immediately a prediction of the Passion (Mk.9.31, Mk.10.33-34), so that Jesus must have indicated some connection. At the Last Supper, the idea of His shedding His blood for many (Mk.14.24) leads naturally to the thought of the Kingdom, where

1. Sketch, p. 63, refuted on pp.73-80.

He will next taste wine (Mk.14.25). And even before the High Priest, the confession which condemned Him brought with it the idea of His future glory (Mk.14.62).

> "4. If Jesus' passion was the inaugural act of the new morality of the Kingdom of God, the success of it depended upon the disciples being led to understand it in this sense, and to act in accordance with it. The Passion-idea was a reflection."[1]

But this is just what it was not. It remained a mystery to the apostles to the end.

If these four fundamental assumptions are untenable, it follows that a new study of the life of Jesus is necessary which will cover all the facts and explain the many problems. This is the Eschatologico-Historical Interpretation.

A great deal of the difficulty has come, Schweitzer thinks, from attempts to explain away the eschatological elements in the life of Jesus. To assume that He was merely an ethical teacher does violence to the text. To see in His words a spiritualisation of the eschatology is not warranted, since the Synoptic gospels show no trace of it. The "development" theory of a successful period of ethical teaching, followed by an unsuccessful period which drove Him to eschatology, has already been proven false. The only remaining course seems to be to accept the eschatological at its face value.

But if eschatology takes first place, what becomes of the ethical teaching? It becomes a call to repentance in the full sense of the Greek word μετάνοια - a moral renewal before the Day of Judgment which comes with the Kingdom. Only the morally fit will enter the Kingdom (Mt.7.21 and the Beatitudes, Mt.5.3-10). But again, the ethics are present, the Kingdom is future. This is what Schweitzer means by an

1. Sketch, p. 64, refuted on pp.80-81.

"interim-ethic" - it is a preparation for the Kingdom, not a part of it, for the Kingdom needs no ethics.

And ethics are important for another reason, implied but not stated by Jesus - that the Kingdom can only come when moral conditions on earth are right. This is the significance of the emphasis on a moral community. Just why this is true Jesus does not explain, except as a mystery, in parables.

The first group of parables of the Kingdom (Mk.4.3-9,26-32; cf. Mt.13.3-9,24-33) all have one message, according to Schweitzer, who rejects the allegorical interpretation of the parable of the sower (Mk.4.13-20; Mt.13.18-23) as a later addition. Much that the sower sowed was lost, yet his harvest was thirty-, sixty-, even a hundredfold. Another sower sowed, then paid no more attention to it, yet there was a great harvest. The mustard seed, though small, became a great tree. The little piece of leaven made the whole loaf leavened. These miracles of nature point to an even greater miracle, that of the Kingdom. Further light is thrown by the hitherto unintelligible word of Jesus in Mt.11.12: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force." Apparently Jesus is referring to the idea that man's repentance is exerting pressure on God to bring in the Kingdom.

This relationship between ethics and eschatology first occurs in the Old Testament prophets, who promised a Day of Judgment because of the nation's wickedness, and a day of victory if it would repent and return. After the exile, devotion to the Law was considered the condition of the Kingdom, which now took on apocalyptic aspects. Jesus' Mystery of the Kingdom of God is therefore a synthesis of prophetic and apocalyptic elements.

The Mystery of the Kingdom of God is Schweitzer's explanation of many problems of exegesis. It makes unnecessary the assumption of a successful period of Jesus' preaching, for only slight success would be necessary to bring in the Kingdom. It explains how, although Jesus preached to a few Galileans, the Kingdom could be expected to cover the whole world. Likewise, Jesus could hold the Law inviolable, for His morality went beyond the Law, and brought in the Kingdom where Law would no longer be necessary. He had no hesitation about "rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Mk.12.17), since Caesar's power would soon be abrogated. Thus even in its character as "interim-ethic", Christian ethics is still an important part of Jesus' teaching.

In the Jerusalem period, Jesus gave more parables of the Kingdom: the vineyard (Mt.21.33-49), the marriage (Mt.22.1-14), the watching servant (Mt.24.42-47), the ten virgins (Mt.25.1-13), and the talents (Mt.25.14-30). But they contain no mystery. They merely point to the immediacy of the Kingdom, and the need for moral conduct before the Judgment. Something has happened since the first group of parables, so that the Mystery of the Kingdom of God is no longer important.

What has happened is recorded in Matthew chapters 10 and 11, which first arrested Schweitzer's attention.[1] In chapter 10, Jesus sends out the twelve to preach the gospel. First He tells them to go not to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt.10.6). The sum total of their message is to be: "The Kingdom of God is at hand."(Mt.10.7). They are to do the miracles He has been doing (Mt.10.8), and to depend entirely on their

1. See above, pp.2-3.

preaching for their living (Mt.10.9-10). He promises doom upon those who will not receive the gospel they preach (Mt.10.11-15), but they themselves will have to endure persecutions (Mt.10.16-23), and "Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come" (Mt.10.23). Then follow exhortations to loyalty in the face of persecution, and promises of reward to those who are faithful even unto death (Mt.10.24-42). Apparently Jesus does not expect the apostles to return, for He expects that while they are still on their mission, the great pre-Messianic tribulation will break out, and be followed by the appearance of the Son of Man upon the clouds of Heaven, as recorded in Daniel (7.13), and the dawn of Messiah's reign. That the disciples do eventually return (Mk.6.30), and apparently without having suffered persecution, puzzles Jesus. Instead of rejoicing with them, or congratulating them on their good work, He immediately tries to retire with them to a desert place apart (Mk.6.31; cf. Mt.14.13). That He is foiled by the crowds who follow Him around the edge of the lake only strengthens His determination to withdraw. He must get away to think through these unexpected developments, and plan what to do next. Why has the Kingdom not come as He expected?

The "Suffering Servant" passages in Isaiah now convince Him that He is to suffer the pre-Messianic persecution alone, in place of His followers, who will thereby escape it. Accordingly, He sets His face to go to Jerusalem, there by His self-sacrifice to fulfill the last condition so that the Kingdom may come. He finally succeeds in provoking the authorities to crucify Him, and His body is laid to rest in Joseph's tomb. When, on the third day, the tomb is found empty, His disciples conclude that He has gone to Heavenly glory to await

the time when He shall appear as the Son of Man. This Mystery of the Passion now takes the place of the Mystery of the Kingdom of God which He had previously preached.

The eleventh chapter of Matthew raises another problem. John the Baptist, lying in Herod's prison, hears of Jesus' preaching and miracles, and sends his disciples to ask, "Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?" (Mt.11.3). That Jesus does not give a simple answer to this simple question has always been a subject of perplexity to exegetes. Instead, He says, "Go and tell John the things that ye hear and see" (Mt.11.4), and points to the very preaching and miracles that had provoked John's question in the first place. Why this evasive answer? According to Schweitzer, "He that should come" (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) refers, not to the Messiah, who was not expected to appear until He came on the clouds of Heaven, but to His great Forerunner, Elijah, who was to come and prepare the way for the Kingdom. Similarly, John's disclaimer at Jordan (Mk.1.7-8, Mt.3.11-12) did not refer to the Messiah, but to Elijah who should precede Him. Now, in company with Jesus' own disciples,and the crowds, he thinks of Jesus as the Forerunner of the Kingdom, and asks for confirmation. Jesus, however, knows that He is the Messiah. That fact had been disclosed to Him at His baptism, if indeed He did not suspect it before that. But He does not feel free to disclose His identity. So now, in answer to John's question, He makes His enigmatic reply. Immediately after John's disciples have departed, He speaks mysteriously of John as Elijah (Mt.11.14). He calls him the greatest born of woman, yet goes on to say that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he (Mt.11.11), presumably because those who are in the Kingdom have been lifted to a supernatural level, beyond the greatest human being ever born.

So far Jesus alone knows that He is the Messiah, and even He does not think of Himself as at present Messiah, but only as Messiah-to-be. He has kept His identity a strict secret, for Messiah's identity is not known until His final appearance as King and Judge. And those who do not know His secret have no reason for suspecting it. However, once they do know, it is possible to see how it colours some of His utterances. For instance, when, in healing the paralytic, He forgives his sins,(Mk.2.1-12), and the scribes challenge His authority to do so, He replies that the Son of Man - whom they do not recognize Him to be - has power on earth to forgive sins (Mk. 2.10). Likewise, when He sends out the twelve, He enjoins them to be loyal to Him personally (Mt.10.32). Only after the return of the twelve do any of them learn His secret. On the mount of Transfiguration (Mk.9.2-13), Peter and James and John, who have gone up to pray with Jesus, are granted a vision of His future glory. Jesus charges them to keep the secret (Mk.9.9). The disciples are bewildered - where is Elijah, if Jesus be not he? (Mk.9.11). So Jesus explains to them, as He had to the crowd in their absence (Mt.11.11) that John is Elijah. Some time later (for Schweitzer finds it necessary to alter the order of events from that of Mark's gospel in order to remove the doublet of the miraculous feeding (Mk.6.35-44 and Mk.8. 1-9) and account for the unexplained appearance and disappearance of the crowd on the latter occasion), Peter, in answer to Jesus' question, blurts out the Messianic secret (Mk.8.27-30). Now the whole circle of the apostles knows the truth, but Jesus again enjoins secrecy.

On the occasion of the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, it is not the Messiah whom the crowd acclaims, but again "He that cometh in the

name of the Lord"(Mk.11.9), that is, ὁ ἐρχόμενος, Elijah. The priests and Sadducees seek a ground to arrest Him, but can find none, also they fear the crowd. Then Judas, one of the twelve who know the secret, reveals it to the priests. This is the betrayal. Jesus is arrested, and when no other charge against Him prevails, the High Priest asks if He is the Messiah. Jesus proudly replies that He is, and that they shall "see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of Heaven" (Mk.14.62). So He is convicted of blasphemy. Next morning, when the crowd learns the charge, it too turns against Him, and shouts, "Crucify Him!" (Mk.15.13-14). Thus it becomes clear why Jesus had kept His identity a secret - it was not necessary for the people to know it, and only caused offence when they did.

This Mystery of the Messiahship, together with those of the Kingdom of God and of the Passion, make up the subject matter of Schweitzer's life of Jesus, a sketch of which is given in the final chapter of the book. The life is divided into two periods, the earlier one of preaching in Galilee, and the later appearance in Jerusalem, separated by a longer period of retirement in the country to the north. During the first period, Jesus is working for the Kingdom by His ethical preaching, enforced by miracles. But there is an eschatological motive in the first period as well as in the last, for Jesus knows that He is to be Messiah, and is looking for the supernatural Kingdom. When the coming of the harvest-time convinces Him that the Kingdom is about to appear, He sends out His disciples to cap the climax of the preaching campaign. He warns them of the pre-Messianic tribulation, and does not expect them back. During their absence He prepares the people for His re-appearance in glory as the Son of Man by intimating that John is Elijah. But the disciples do return, and the Kingdom has not yet come. The crowd, augmented by the

apostles' preaching, follows Him around the lake. There He celebrates with them an anticipatory celebration of the Messianic meal, which He still expects immediately, although the participants are as unaware of its character as they are of His identity with the Son of Man. Then He retires to pray, while the disciples set sail across the lake. During the storm they are blown close to the shore in the darkness, and see Jesus, who has come to join them, apparently walking upon the water. As He enters the boat, the storm abates.

Six days later He takes the three "intimates", Peter, James, and John, up the mountain to pray with Him. There they learn His identity through the Transfiguration, which is apparently an ecstatic vision shared by all. The continued delay of the Kingdom causes Jesus to seek a reason. He comes to the conclusion that He must fulfill in His own person the prophecies about the Suffering Servant of the Lord, and bear the pre-Messianic tribulation alone. He withdraws with His disciples to the north, and there, after they learn His identity through Peter's confession, He reveals the secret of the Passion to them. He chooses the following Passover as the time of His self-sacrifice because there will be more prospective members of the Kingdom at Jerusalem then. He is recognized at Jericho by the miracle of healing blind Bartimaeus, and acclaimed at the Triumphal Entry as the great Prophet and Forerunner. He deliberately provokes the authorities by His attitude so that they will seize and kill Him. Their fear of the people is only overcome by Judas' betrayal of the Messianic secret. The evening before His death Jesus again celebrates the Messianic meal with the apostles in anticipation of His return after His death. Then He retires to pray with Peter, who has just sworn to be loyal even unto death, and James and John, who have said they are able to drink His cup with Him, that they

may all escape the tribulation. The apostles, who do not understand the danger, fall asleep, but Jesus accedes to the Heavenly will that He must die. He is arrested, condemned for blasphemy, and crucified the following day.

In his epilogue to this work, Schweitzer asserts that He has restored to Jesus the honour due to His greatness, which the "liberal" school of critics, with their theologising and psychologising, had destroyed, but which must needs be the basis of any true worship.

c. The Quest of the Historical Jesus.

The Quest of the Historical Jesus is undoubtedly Schweitzer's best known work in the New Testament field. His two-fold Abendmahl had not received wide attention. But the Quest, a history of research into the life of Jesus, commanded it. Yet it really adds very little to the understanding of Schweitzer's own views which can be gained from the Sketch. Its chief contribution is that it gives his estimate of his predecessors' research. It is a very thorough account, comprising 401 pages in the first German (and English) edition, and enlarged to 642 pages in the second (untranslated) edition, which deals also with Schweitzer's contemporaries up to 1912.

He begins by stating the "problem" of the historical Jesus, about whom the gospels give but meagre and conflicting accounts. The early church had been forced by the delay of the Messianic appearance to give more and more heed to His divinity, and recorded only those of His human deeds and teachings which pointed to His Messiahship. As their eschatological hopes waned, they sought more and more a supernatural Jesus, such as the Fourth Gospel portrays in its Logos Christology. The controversies of the early church dealt with

matters of faith, not of history, and the Chalcedonian declaration for two distinct natures firmly established the supernatural in the creed of the church. There was no possibility of a really historical conception of Jesus until this supernatural element could be removed.

Reimarus was the first to do this. He was not a theologian, but a professor of Oriental Languages at Hamburg. His The Aims of Jesus and His Disciples appeared only after his death, published by his friend Lessing. He tried to get back of the doctrines to the facts of Jesus' life. Incidentally, his historical research led him to consider eschatology the motivating factor in Jesus' life, and to suppose that the disciples, in order to evade the issue of His failure to return immediately, stole His body and allowed it to decompose before they began preaching the resurrection and the future Parousia. Reimarus' contemporary Semler made a detailed reply to the offence caused by such radical views, but they left the world of theology practically undisturbed for some time.

Nevertheless, the seed of a rational understanding of Jesus' life had been planted. The following generation began to try to show how reasonable Jesus' teachings and ethics are. As a result they tended to read the views of their times into the sayings of Jesus, which they paraphrased in an attempt to explain them. They usually evaded the question of the miracles, attaching to them only an ethical value. In this group Schweitzer names Hess, Reinhard, Opitz, Jakobi, and above all Herder, who endeavored to explain the differences between the gospels along literary lines.

Before long, however, the problem of the miracles had to be settled. The first to attempt to explain them away were Bahrdt and

Venturini, who pictured Jesus as the tool of a secret society of Essenes, and the miracles as trickery performed by the group. They are interesting and ingenious attempts, but their imaginings hardly deserve the name of research.

Paulus, on the other hand, was a whole-hearted rationalist, who attacked at every step all that could not be explained by the reason. His treatment of the miracles, while avoiding the fantastic, nevertheless discredits them completely. He supposes that in each case some secondary cause, of which the disciples were not aware, was involved. Hase and Schleiermacher follow him in this, although they do not always venture a solution of the miracles. But they are interested in another problem - the main connection between the events of Jesus' life. Schleiermacher, with his emphasis on the Fourth Gospel, and his dialectic treatment, really wrote a life of Jesus based on his own theology. Hase, on the other hand, made some important contributions. He regards the stories of the birth and childhood and of the natural signs that accompanied the crucifixion as "mythical". He sees Jesus' life divided into two periods, and supposes a development of His thought. He recognizes the fact that Jesus did not speak of His Messiahship until after the incident at Caesarea Philippi.

The greatest figure in the whole history of the life of Jesus research, in Schweitzer's opinion, is David Friederich Strauss. Faced with the records of supernatural events for which no rational explanation is satisfactory, he goes behind the records and supposes that the evangelists, impressed as they were by the Divine in Jesus, allowed all sorts of myths to creep into their records, the main

object of which was to witness to this Divine element in Jesus. Just how much of the narrative is mythical, Strauss is not always prepared to say, but his usual judgment is rather too sweeping. Another contribution of Strauss is the exposure of the fact that the Johannine gospel is based upon a definite philosophical theory, which conditions the narrative, and inserts an apologetic element. But Strauss also denies the priority of Mark, partly because the rationalists had used it so effectively, and partly because the events seem so disconnected, and thinks Matthew forms a better basis for historical research. He sees in the discourses in Matthew collections of the sayings of Jesus, but feels Matthew has made the most logical collections. Even the parables have, according to Strauss, been worked over, and are mutually dependent. On the whole, however, his findings are mostly negative, and his importance lies in his having swept away so much rubble in the research. His attitude toward the question of eschatology is almost that of Johannes Weiss, in that he thinks of the Kingdom as supernatural. He acknowledges his debt to Reimarus in this respect.

Three problems arose out of the controversy occasioned by the appearance of Strauss' life.of Jesus. The first was the question of miracle, the historicity of which the mythical theory seemed to deny, whereas the theologians had come around to the view that miracles were possible, nay probable, and to be explained by greater insight into natural law than the science of the day could claim. Even the rationalists, with all their explaining, had supposed some basis of fact behind the gospel narrative. The second problem raised by Strauss' work was philosophical: what is the relation of the Jesus of history to the Christ of faith? Schweitzer passes over the prob-

lem here, pointing out only that Strauss defended his views on Hegelian bases. He raises it again, however, in the concluding chapter of the Quest, in a somewhat different form. The third problem which Strauss underlined was the relation of John's gospel to the Synoptics as historical sources. It was largely ignored by supporters of the Fourth gospel, since they based their theology upon it.

The next development was the Marcan hypothesis. It was first promulgated by Weisse, on philosophical as well as literary grounds, and his conclusions were seconded by Wilke from the historical point of view. Weisse points out especially the apologetic and philosophical character of the Johannine gospel. But he does not go to the extreme of basing his whole argument on Mark, just because it is first - he sees mythical elements even in it, especially with regard to the miracles. He does not find two periods in Jesus' life, but attests His popularity up to the end, and His forcing the authorities to crucify Him, probably under the influence of the Suffering Servant passages in Isaiah. He even notices that Jesus did not proclaim His Messiahship to the crowds, but supposes that "the Son of Man" meant simply "man".

Like Strauss and Weisse, Bruno Bauer shows that the philosophical background of John nullifies its historicity. To him, the Fourth gospel stands in direct opposition to the Synoptics. Yet even the latter may have a purely literary origin, for they set forth the eschatological point of view, of which there is no evidence in other contemporary works. Jesus' silence about His Messiahship shows that He did not hold Himself to be Messiah. So all the gospels must be literary in their origin. That the disciples took Him for the Mes-

siah is due to the character of His work. Their attitude is responsible for the legends which grew up about Him. Thus Bauer's attitude is complete and unreserved scepticism, aroused by the repugnance of the arguments levelled at Strauss.

Meanwhile, the fantastic lives of Jesus, started by Bahrdt and Venturini, continued to use the Essenes to explain the miracles. Their main contribution is that they provide a continuity in the life of Jesus which the less imaginative lacked. In Ghillany's work something like Schweitzer's eschatological view comes to the fore, although his Deistic church is quite unchristian. But the most important of these fanciful lives was written, not by a German, but by a Frenchman, Renan. His work pretends to be critical, but is really popular, and covered over by so much sentimental gloss that it is hard to discover the historical truth.

The German reaction to Renan is the "liberal" life of Jesus. Strauss himself wrote one, in which the removal of myth leaves a preconceived spiritual Christ, much like the Johannine Christ whom he denies. For him the eschatology is part of the mythical element. Schenkel and Weizsäcker, though holding to the Marcan hypothesis, also claim a measure of truth for John's gospel, and use parts of it in their lives. Holtzmann champions the Marcan hypothesis, which leads him to discover a development in Jesus' thought - he also finds traces of it in John - with a break at the controversy over ceremonial purity in Mark 7, before which Jesus had found success in His attempt to establish a spiritual Kingdom, but after which He was doomed to failure and death. Eschatology is rejected, and the great discourses in Matthew are all regarded as composite structures. Keim, who in-

vented the development theory, does not reject the eschatology to the same degree, although he practically cancels it by his spiritual interpretation of it. Beyschlag allows Johannine influences to cloud the eschatology, and discovers three periods of development. B. Weiss frequently appeals to the argumentum e silentio, and psychologizes too much. In short, all these lives of Jesus mediate between John and the Synoptics. They do not deal adequately with the significance of the eschatology or with Jesus' attitude about His Messiahship. They claim that Jesus did not reveal it until late in His ministry in order in the meantime to bring His disciples to a higher conception of what the Messiahship meant, although there is no indication of that in the text.

But this "liberal" psychologizing view could not be maintained forever. Colani, as early as 1864, had recognized the eschatology in the text, although he did not think Jesus considered himself the Messiah, but rather as a spiritual Son of Man, with the result that to him the eschatology is interpolated. Volkmar considered all the gospels late, but Mark the earliest and only historical source, with Luke before Matthew, so that the eschatology is easy to eliminate. He rejects the eschatology because his conception of the Messiahship is wholly political, and Jesus' aims were not political. So the eschatological passages are a pious fiction of Mark. Weiffenbach regards the eschatology as a misunderstanding of some remark of Jesus about a visible personal return, distorted by the Jewish hopes of His followers. He makes the resurrection and the parousia identical, and only supernatural in the minds of His disciples because of their own eschatological hopes. Balden-

sperger brings the light of Jewish apocalyptic to bear on the subject, and claims it does not fit Jesus, who spiritualized it. But J. Weiss was the first to give the eschatology its full importance, without compromise, because he first understands the Kingdom of God non-spiritually, as an eschatological conception, with Jesus looking forward to it, rather than trying to establish it. Jesus preaches its nearness, but when it does not come, He decides that the people's repentance is not sufficient, and His own death must be the price. In this sense, He dies for His nation. His ethics are world-denying; His Messiahship is future.

In reply to Weiss, Bousset seeks to contrast Jewish eschatology with that of Jesus, who, he claims, spiritualized it, along purer lines. The Kingdom had a present as well as a future aspect, and Jesus did not deny the world, but had joy in it. His ethical teaching, while of a world-renouncing kind, did nevertheless deal with the world, and not with some future heavenly Kingdom. All this shows how modern ideas were attributed to Jesus. Eschatology helps to distinguish between modern ideas read into Jesus' words, and the ideas which He actually held. The whole problem is ~~that~~ whether, if Jesus was so completely eschatological, ~~how could~~ Christianity could have developed from Him? Brandt made this objection. For him, Jesus was a teacher, and the disciples were being trained to be teachers. He even does away with the Triumphal Entry. He considers John's preaching the event which made clear to Jesus the nearness of the Kingdom. Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem, not to die, but to have a larger center from which to preach. His Messianic consciousness was a high sense of vocation to do God's will, but it brought about His arrest and

execution. The post-resurrection experiences were ecstatic, and occurred in Galilee. However, this teaching theory raises several problems: It receives a severe jolt from the fact that the parables were meant to conceal as well as to reveal. Jülicher, however, calls this saying an innovation, and points out how clear the parables actually are. Then there is the difficulty about the immediate coming of the Son of Man in Matthew 10, which Bousset solves by rejecting the whole incident. The saying in Mt.11.12 about the "violent" who "seize the Kingdom" causes a great deal of trouble. It is not to be solved as Alex. Schweizer tried to do by supposing it was the condemnation of a zealotic movement, since we have no other reason to believe such a movement had sprung up from John's preaching. But the principal problem of all whose raised by Weiss is that of the Son of Man. Just what does this expression mean? Weiss stands out for the Danielic meaning, without any attempted spiritualisation. Bousset indeed tried to read his idea of the Messiahship into it. In the end, it turned out to be a philological problem, to be decided along with others from the Aramaic.

Interest in the Aramaic background of the gospels had received fresh impetus from Kautsch's and Dalman's researches. Attempts had even been made to retranslate the gospels into Aramaic. It was Lietzmann's thesis in 1896 that renewed the "Son of Man" discussion. According to him, the Aramaic בַּר אֱנָשׁ simply means "man". But Dalman, by more extensive study, showed this was not the case. The phrase "Son of Man" did have definite significance from its use in Daniel, although Dalman fails to see how Jesus, a man on earth, could have used it. Certainly it could not have meant simply "I",

for prior to Caesarea Philippi, the apostles did not recognize Jesus as Messiah. Jesus must therefore have used the term to designate the future Messiah, and applied it to Himself in predicting the Passion because He was to be the future Messiah in virtue of that Passion. Where He apparently uses the term as equivalent to "I" in other passages, it is probably a literary error of the evangelists, who did not realize the distinction, or else a reference to the future Messiah applied to the present man. But on the whole, Aramaic study has yielded surprisingly little result.

A similar study of rabbinical sources yielded little more than a number of problems, but it does seem to have done away with the possibility of an earthly political Messiah, since both Ezra and Baruch show a waiting people, whose previous acts might only seem to hinder, not help, the Kingdom. The indifference of the Psalms of Solomon to eschatology is the same indifference which Jesus encountered in the scribes and Pharisees. They cared nothing for the transcendental ideal of apocalyptic, but depended wholly on the Law and the prophets to bring Israel back to God. The Similitudes of Enoch bring in again the apocalyptic element, which entirely takes the field in the apocalypses of Ezra and Baruch. This apocalyptic element is entirely transcendental, and has no place for an earthly appearance of Messiah before His appearance on the clouds of Heaven. Nor is He expected to perform miracles, but rather to be one Himself. The resurrection idea, too, is apocalyptic. The prophets do not consider it, but expect the Day of the Lord in their own time. But in apocalyptic, the Kingdom is deferred, and the righteous dead rise to enjoy the final Kingdom of God. Thus, Schweitzer thinks, Jesus'

contribution was to combine the prophetic and apocalyptic concepts, and to identify the Messiah with the Son of Man, thereby placing the pre-Messianic persecution just before the coming of the Kingdom, and making it possible for the elect to be killed in it and still rise into the Kingdom. Jesus' eschatology is therefore much simpler than that of His contemporaries, the writers of IV Ezra and Baruch, who differentiate between Messiah and Son of Man, between the Day of the Lord and the Last Judgment, between the Messianic Kingdom and the eternal Kingdom of God. His point of view is shown by the question about David's son being also David's Lord, the point of which was that the Messiah, David's Son, was the same as his Lord, the Son of Man. Other rabbinic references to Jesus in the Talmud are mostly legendary, as is also the Toldoth Jesu, a medieval writing.[1]

Rudolf Seydel attempted to trace Jesus and His teaching to Buddhist sources, but without success.

At the turn of the century, the "liberal" life of Jesus was still being written. H. J. Holtzmann never did write his, although he gave many of his ideas in his commentary on the synoptics and in his New Testament Theology. Oskar Holtzmann, however, tried to write a life of Jesus based on the Marcan text alone. He has a bad habit of reading between the lines, and comes to the conclusion that Jesus taught a new religion. His fault is that he groups his material psychologically rather than according to context, and often the

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1. The material summarized in this paragraph is taken from the later, untranslated German edition of the Quest, which introduces it at this point. In the first edition, a much briefer treatment is found in the midst of Schweitzer's discussion of his own view, see English edition, pp.364-368.

facts of the narrative are sacrificed to give the Marcan hypothesis full play. Schmidt, Schmiedel, and von Soden all write similar lives. They tend to know things that are not in the gospel record. They tend, too, to reject all the eschatological material as mythical, and so the gospel they present is very little like Mark's although they claim it is his. Moreover, they are influenced by Nietzsche to introduce Germanic elements into their conception of Jesus which do not belong to Him at all. Pfleiderer, meanwhile, tries to give due credit to eschatology, and ends in scepticism. Kalthoff goes further, and even claims that Jesus Himself is an invention of early Christian minds. Von Hartmann and De Jonge try to present a Jewish Jesus, the latter basing his arguments on the Fourth Gospel. Friedländer, like Gfrörer and Noack years before, tries to base Christianity on Essenism and Hellenism.[1] Kirchbach too prefers John's gospel, and spiritualizes. Many imaginative lives, based on Venturini, and some theosophical lives, also appear. De Loosten, Binet-Sanglé, and others, examine Jesus psychiatrically, and decide He was a paranoiac or an epileptic like many other prophet-seers.[2]

With the appearance of Wrede's Messianic Secret and Schweitzer's Sketch, the "historical" Jesus of the "liberal" school was mortally challenged. Though different in their solutions, these two books present the same problem. Mark is not an historical account in the

1. This material only in the later German edition of the Quest.

2. Schweitzer's M.D. thesis, Die psychiatrische Beurteilung Jesu, is an attempt to show that His extraordinary attitudes and actions were not due to mental disease, but to His eschatological beliefs, which coloured His whole world of thought. Whether Schweitzer succeeds in refuting them is a matter for experts in mental studies to decide. The author of this thesis is no expert in such matters, being a student of theology, not of medicine or psychiatry.

sense that the theologians have tried to make it - it consists of a number of stories about Jesus, without any very definite connection. To supply this connection, modern theology has resorted to its own more or less inspired imagination. Both Wrede and Schweitzer challenge this method and demand adherence to the text. Jesus' Messianic secret is the new way suggested for explaining the various incidents. Wrede, like Bauer, does not believe in the eschatology, and supposes it to have been introduced by the evangelist. The theory of secrecy is a literary invention to make the eschatology more probable. Schweitzer, however, takes it as historical, and tries to work out the details from this supposition. He goes on to point out inconsistencies in Wrede's theory, especially its admission of another, more trustworthy tradition. Schweitzer seizes on this more trustworthy tradition as being that presented by Mark and Matthew, and develops the eschatological interpretation already worked out in the Sketch.

Since the original edition of the Quest appeared, the tendency has been to follow Wrede's attitude of scepticism, rather than Schweitzer's emphasis on eschatology. Some go considerably farther than Wrede in supposing that Jesus never existed, but that His story is to be explained from the religious world of the time, as known by comparative religion. There are two lines taken by the proponents of this view: according to Robertson, Jensen, Drews, and others, Jesus is a mythical character, like Attis or Dionysius, or the Persian Gilgamesch, or some of the astrological deities, and the suggestion is made that these saviour-gods were taken over into Christianity and adapted to fit its requirements. W.B.Smith and

his followers, on the other hand, believe that the stories of Jesus were invented as symbols by a pre-Christian gnostic sect, out of which Christianity grew. Schweitzer finds in these theories four main questions raised: one has to do with the philosophy of religion, one with comparative religion, one with the history of dogma, and one with literary history. The first is the question of Jesus' place in Christianity: could He possibly have acquired such a central position in it if He were a myth or a symbol adapted to fit the case? The second is whether the religious world at the time of Christ could have produced such a religion without such a personality as Jesus. The third asks if Christ is the product of Christian ideas, instead of the reverse. The fourth demands whether the New Testament documents are purely literary inventions rather than historical records. Schweitzer answers each question in the negative, and supports his answers with facts much less imaginative than those supposed by the deniers of Jesus' historicity.

During the period between the two editions (1907-1912), a number of less startling works also appeared. There were a few lives of Jesus, both eschatological and modern: Loisy's and Maurenbrecher's and others'. The eschatological question was treated by H.J.Holtzmann (Schweitzer's own professor) for the "liberal" school, and others. Holtzmann tries to do just what Schweitzer had warned could not be done - to adopt as much of the eschatological view as could be accepted without destroying the present significance of the Son of Man and the Kingdom of God. England, especially, seems to have been stirred by the Quest, for many appeared there both to defend and to attack it. The relative value of the different synoptic gospels,

and the "two-source" theory of their origins, were well worked over, and various attempts were made to prove historicity for the Fourth Gospel. Other questions dealt with include chronology, the work of the Baptist, the Transfiguration and Peter's confession, the Last Supper, the Passion, and the Resurrection. But Schweitzer, having achieved his position, does not find himself obliged to abandon it.

In conclusion, he notes that the result of research into the Life of Jesus has been mostly negative. In its attempt to bring Jesus into its own times, theology has loosed Him from the fetters of dogma, and rejoiced to see Him regain a measure of life. But as it went deeper into the gospel story, it came face to face with the fact that Jesus lived in a quite different world, not only as regards historical circumstances, but also as regards religious expectations, and Jesus retired from the present scene back to the one in which He had lived, despite all the attempts of modern theologians to keep Him contemporary. So it has not profited very much to learn what we could about "Christ after the flesh". As He mattered little to Paul, so He is really of little value to the present generation. But, positively, as we turn from the historical Jesus to the living, present Christ of the Spirit, and absorb ourselves in Him, we learn about Him all we need to know in order to serve Him.

d. Books on Paul.

Schweitzer's book on Paul and His Interpreters is similar to the Quest in plan, in that it deals with the history of research into the theology of Paul. Like the Quest, too, it pays particular attention to the eschatological element. However, the life and thought of Jesus are referred to only in contradistinction to Paul's. These references

are few and far between, just simply because Paul does not himself appeal to Jesus and His teachings, but only to the death and resurrection of Christ.

This is also true of The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, although in the latter the references are not so general; and since the book is so recent compared with Schweitzer's other New Testament works, they deserve attention.

The first of these references, in the fourth chapter of the book, on The Eschatological Doctrine of Redemption, draws attention to a common belief in angels and demons, and the idea of redemption as a deliverance from the latter. The conception of Jesus' death as a ransom is the same as that in the Sketch: that He took the pre-Messianic tribulation upon Himself, so that His followers need not share it. As for remission of sins, Jesus is undoubtedly connecting the Kingdom which He is about to establish by His death with Jeremiah's conception of the New Covenant (Jer.31.31-34) in which God promises forgiveness of sins. The pre-Messianic tribulation, which was to atone for sin, Jesus takes upon Himself. That Jesus did not preach this redemption has no significance - it avails for the elect whether they know it or not.

In the following chapter, there is a reference to Jesus' view of the End, in which He will be Messiah and Judge. It is based largely on Enoch, and includes the victory of Messiah over His enemies the powers of Evil, and the Judgment and the eternal Kingdom. Even those who are still living at the Day of the Lord will experience resurrection to enter into the Kingdom. Jesus' own identity with the Son of Man is again derived from the question about David's

son being also his Lord.

The religious community of the elect is the subject of the third reference, in the chapter on Christ-Mysticism. Jesus Himself preached a kind of Christ-Mysticism in the sense that His followers, by their fellowship with Him in the first life will have it also in the second with the Messiah, although He did not explain how this would come about, but those who were offended in Him in His humiliation could not hope to be with Him in His glory. The pre-celebration of the Messianic meal at the feeding of the multitude and at the Last Supper were in token of this fellowship with Him.

In the chapter on the Spirit, both John the Baptist's and Jesus' views are dealt with. Joel had prophesied an outpouring of the Spirit with the coming of the Kingdom. So John expects Jesus as the "Coming One" to baptize with the Spirit. And Jesus thinks of His miracles as evidence of the Spirit working through Him.

In dealing with Mysticism and the Law, Schweitzer points out that Jesus believed in a universal preaching of the gospel only in the sense that the heathen elect would be made known at the Judgment Day. The disciples are directed to go only to Jews in their mission. The elect are determined by whether they believe the gospel when it is preached to them - compare Paul's doctrine of justification by faith - and by whether they understand the parables or not. The Law is to have effect so long as the world shall last, that is, until the Kingdom comes.

Again on the question of Sacraments, John's and Jesus' views are both expounded. John expected his water-baptism to be valid in that Jesus would baptize the same people with the Spirit, wash-

ing away sin and preparing for the Judgment. Jesus Himself never seems to have used water-baptism, yet it was a sacrament in the church from the very beginning and in the same sense as John's baptism. The disciples hoped likewise to impart a baptism of the Spirit, and He was indeed given. Jesus did not use it, not because it had no value, but because adherence to Him was all that was necessary for salvation. His sacrament is rather that of the Last Supper, the anticipatory celebration of the Messianic meal which made partakers eligible for the real Messianic meal in the Kingdom. The petition "Give us this day our daily bread" in the Lord's prayer refers not to ordinary food, but to the Messianic meal, according to Schweitzer, for whom ἐπιούσιον means not "daily" but "coming".

In the ethical field alone, Paul refers to the sayings of Jesus, and aside from the underlying conception of repentance as the basis of ethics and love as its expression, the details differ widely just because of the difference between him and Jesus in their eschatological concepts.

In the concluding chapters of the book, Schweitzer traces his theory of the Hellenisation of Christianity which produced the gospel of John, and an account of the gospel of Jesus in the early church, showing how the eschatology dropped out of Christian teaching as the years went by.

It is evident from these references to Jesus' views how little Schweitzer's underlying conception of the eschatological background of the life of Jesus has been altered by further study, except in minor details. It might be interesting if he could find time to bring all his books up to date. At the same time, there would prob-

ably be little change, except to lengthen the two volumes dealing with the history of research into the life of Jesus and the theology of Paul, in order to include more recent works on the subject. Fundamentally, the Eschatological Interpretation of the Life of Jesus would be the same as ever.

Chapter Two

SCHWEITZER AS HISTORIAN

1. History as a theological tool.

In his New Testament writings, Schweitzer is interested first and foremost in the reconstruction of history. This is not surprising when one considers the prevailing theological climate in which he pursued his studies, and the special personification of it in his New Testament professor, H. J. Holtzmann, who was one of the leading proponents of "liberal" German scholarship.[1] As Schweitzer's biographer, George Seaver, points out:

> "It must be remembered that the Quest was written forty years ago, when Protestant liberalism was at its peak."[2]

Schweitzer acknowledges his debt to it in these terms:

> "When, at some future day, our period of civilisation shall lie, closed and completed, before the eyes of later generations, German theology will stand out as a great, unique phenomenon in the mental and spiritual life of our time. For nowhere save in the German temperament can there be found in the same perfection the living complex of conditions and factors - of philosophical thought, critical acumen, historical insight, and religious feeling - without which no deep theology is possible.
>
> "And the greatest achievement of German theology is the critical investigation of the life of Jesus. What it has accomplished here has laid down the conditions and determined the course of the religious thinking of the future."[3]

We may feel that he exaggerates in ascribing all these virtues to German theologians alone, but there can be no doubt of the high esteem in which he holds them. He regards his work as the culmination of theirs. Thus, in Das Abendmahlsproblem, he devotes 44 pages

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1. See above, pp. 2-3, also pp.30 & 35.

2. Albert Schweitzer: Christian Revolutionary, p.4.

3. Quest, p.1.

to a critical study of their attempts to solve it, and only 18 pages to his investigation of the gospel and patristic records and his own solution. Similarly, in the study of the life of Jesus as a whole, the statement of his own position in the German edition of the Sketch takes 109 pages, while his history of research into the subject in the Quest fills 401 pages in the first edition, and 642 pages in the second, enlarged, as yet untranslated edition, of which only 52 pages in the first edition, and 66 in the second, constitute a restatement of his own views. Thus in each case he acknowledges his debt to the German scholarship of which he felt himself a part, and even though the results of his research differed so widely from theirs, the spirit and purpose were the same.

The spirit can best be described as a determination to be "critical". It was the spirit of the times. Physical science had learned the dangers of accepting the insights and suppositions of past ages on authority. The Copernican theory of the universe had completely superseded the ancient view that the earth was flat, and that sun, moon, and stars revolved about it. The Darwinian theory of evolution, supported by the findings of geology and archeology, had shaken theology out of its literal adherence to the Biblical account of creation. The 18th-century "enlightenment" had insisted on the primacy of human reason. All this had an unsettling influence on the study of the New Testament. No longer were theologians willing to accept any teaching of the Church on the authority of the past. Each doctrine must be subjected to the most unrelenting scrutiny, and tested experimentally wherever possible. And if it could not be scientifically established, then, no matter how precious a matter of faith it might be, it was

discarded. This demanded a certain ruthlessness - in fact, Schweitzer suggests that for this task, hate might be a more useful motive than love:

> "For hate as well as love can write a Life of Jesus, and the greatest of them are written with hate: that of Reimarus, the Wolfenbüttel Fragmentist, and that of David Friederich Strauss. It was not so much hate of the Person of Jesus as of the supernatural nimbus with which it was so easy to surround Him, and with which He had in fact been surrounded. They were eager to picture Him as truly and purely human, to strip from Him the robes of splendour with which He had been apparelled, and clothe Him once more with the coarse garments in which He had walked in Galilee."[1]

But many who loved Jesus also wrote Lives. That it took courage, great courage, to be as ruthless as seemed required, is stated thus:

> "Those who tried to bring Jesus to life at the call of love, found it a cruel task to be honest. The critical study of the life of Jesus has been for theology a school of honesty. The world has never seen before, and will never see again, a struggle for truth so full of pain and renunciation as that of which the Lives of Jesus of the last hundred years contain the cryptic record. One must read the successive Lives of Jesus with which Hase followed the course of the study from the 'twenties to the 'seventies of the nineteenth century to get an inkling of what it must have cost the men who lived through that decisive period really to maintain that 'courageous freedom of investigation' which the great Jena professor, in the preface of his first Life of Jesus, claims for his researches. One sees in him the marks of the struggle with which he gives up, bit by bit, things which, when he wrote that preface, he never dreamed he would have to surrender."[2]

Of necessity, this "critical" spirit had a marked effect on the works produced. Schweitzer observes two periods, which he calls the "rationalistic", before Strauss, and the "liberal" or "modern", since his time. But actually each of these adjectives is characteristic in greater or less degree of the whole movement. In the first period, the rationalism came to the fore because:

1. Quest, pp. 4-5.

2. Quest, pp.5-6.

> "The dominant interest in the first (period) is the question of miracle. What terms are possible between a historical treatment and the acceptance of supernatual events? With the advent of Strauss this problem found a solution, viz., that these events have no rightful place in the history, but are simply mythical elements in the sources."[1]

Yet the same rationalistic spirit is also characteristic of the second period, in which Jesus was considered simply as a human being, and the problem of His life was to explain the causal connection between the separate recorded events of His life. Thus history was expected to explain the outward causation, and psychology the reasons for His thoughts. A typical problem was

> "the concurrence in Jesus of an ethical with an eschatological line of thought.. . . . How can two such different views of the world, in part diametrically opposed to one another, be united in <u>one</u> process of thought?"[2]

The usual solution was reached either by

> "eliminating altogether eschatology from the field of Jesus' thought"[3],

or

> "by <u>sublimating</u> the eschatology, as though Jesus had translated the realistic conceptions of His time into spiritual terms by using them in a figurative sense."[4]

This resulted in reducing Him to a teacher - no doubt the greatest teacher who ever lived, but no more than that - whom His disciples, inspired by faith in His resurrection, had deified as the Jewish Messiah.

The first period was also just as "liberal" as the second, in

1. <u>Quest</u>, p. 10.
2. <u>Sketch</u>, p. 84.
3. <u>Sketch</u>, p. 84.
4. <u>Sketch</u>, p. 85.

that in both men's minds sought freedom to reject any accepted dogma of the Church which did not seem true in the light of their research. Thus Reimarus pointed out that

> "The genuineness of the command to baptize in Matt.28.19 is questionable, not only as a saying ascribed to the risen Jesus, but also because it is universalistic in outlook, and because it implies the doctrine of the Trinity, and consequently, the metaphysical Divine Sonship of Jesus."[1]

This differs in degree, but not in kind, from the attempt of

> "modern theology . . . to read between the lines a whole host of things, and those often the most important, and then to foist them upon the text by means of psychological conjecture."[2]

Schweitzer himself is not immune from such faults, as is shown by his own rearrangement of the central chapters of Mark's gospel to suit his theories.[3] In fact, the liberal theologians were willing to make any experiment which offered any prospect of yielding further knowledge. They had infinite faith in the value of absolute truth, or, to use Schweitzer's words:

> "In the study of the Life of Jesus it (i.e., German theology) was working for the future - in pure faith in the truth, not seeing whereunto it wrought."[4]

Likewise, both periods are "modern" in spirit: in each, scholars were attempting to reinterpret the gospel data in terms which their own age could understand. They conceived their task as the reconstruction of the gospel history, on the assumption that the more could be historically known about Jesus, the more intelligible He would become. They supposed that

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1. Quest, p. 18.
2. Quest, p. 330.
3. See Sketch, ch. 7, and Quest, pp. 380-384.
4. Quest, p. 2.

> "Jesus would mean more to our time by entering into it as a man like ourselves."[1]

Indeed, Schweitzer intimates that they were obsessed with the idea.

> "The thought that we could build up by the increase of historical knowledge a new and vigorous Christianity, and set free new spiritual forces, rules us like a fixed idea."[2]

In his preface to his earliest New Testament book, Das Abendmahlsproblem, which has not been translated into English, he wrote:

> "Wir mussen an die Geschichte glauben, d.h. wir müssen der Zuversicht sein, dass mit dem Fortschritt der geschichtlichen Erkenntnis zugleich die Vertiefung und Einigung in Glauben notwendig verbunden ist, obwohl es manchmal vorerst nicht den Anschein hat."[3]

By the time he wrote the Quest, however, he appears to be aware that the historical method has definite limitations, at least as to its results. So he remarks:

> "There is nothing more negative than the result of the critical study of the life of Jesus."[4]

Like the others, he had planned to write a Life of Jesus. He says as much in the preface to the Sketch:

> "I publish this new view as a sketch, since it belongs of necessity within the frame of this work on the Lord's Supper. I hope, however, from the criticism of its general lines to reach greater clearness with regard to many exegetical details before I can think of giving these thoughts definite shape in an elaborated 'Life of Jesus'."[5]

But he never did get around to writing it. The Quest contains an even briefer statement of his position than the Sketch. In the meantime, he had apparently come to the conclusion that to publish

1. Quest, p. 397.
2. ibid., p. 398.
3. Das Abendmahlsproblem, p. xi.
4. Quest, p. 396.
5. Sketch, p. 7.

a Life of Jesus would serve no good purpose, for he writes in the closing chapter of the Quest:

> "Whatever the ultimate solution may be, the historical Jesus of Whom the criticism of the future, taking as its starting-point the problems which have been regognized and admitted, will draw the portrait . . . He will not be a Jesus Christ to Whom the religion of the present can ascribe, according to its long-cherished custom, its own thoughts and ideas. . . . . The historical Jesus will be to our time a stranger and an enigma.
>
> "The study of the life of Jesus has had a curious history. It set out in quest of the historical Jesus, believing that when it had found Him it could bring Him straight into our time as a Teacher and Saviour. It loosed the bands by which He had been riveted for centuries to the stony rocks of ecclesiastical doctrine, and rejoiced to see life and movement coming into the figure once more, and the historical Jesus advancing, as it seemed, to meet it. But He does not stay; He passes by our time and returns to His own . . . by the same inevitable necessity by which the liberated pendulum returns to its original position."[1]

This last paragraph is quoted in a number of books written about Schweitzer, and rightly so. Not only does it explain the English title, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, but it shows in what sense Schweitzer considers his work the culmination of nineteenth-century German research. Like the others, he had started out on the "quest". Like them, he had sought Jesus through historical criticism. But because he had been "thoroughgoing", to use his own word, and carried his research to its logical conclusion, he had given the coup de grâce to the whole movement. A completely human, entirely understandable Jesus is of no great value as an object of worship, because his humanity makes Him subject to error - the overwhelming error of living His life and dying His death on the cross for the sake of a parousia which did not take place then, and has not yet taken place, and in which many Christians no longer believe, at least in the im-

1. Quest, pp.396-397.

mediate sense in which He did.

This is not to say, however, that Schweitzer renounces the historical research of which his own work was a part. On the contrary, he still believes it has value, for he goes on:

> "It is impossible to over-estimate the value of what German research upon the life of Jesus has accomplished. It is a uniquely great expression of sincerity, one of the most significant events in the whole mental and spiritual life of humanity. What has been done for the religious life of the present and immediate future by the modern-liberal and popularising research, in spite of all its errors, only becomes evident when one examines the literature and social culture of the Latin nations, who have been scarcely if at all touched by the influence of these thinkers."[1]

One of the chief values which Schweitzer claims for his own historical research is that it has restored to Jesus the greatness which is His due. He even states it as the aim of the Sketch:

> "to depict the figure of Jesus in its overwhelming heroic greatness and to impress it upon the modern age and the modern theology."[2]

To many, however, it seems as if he had not restored it, but destroyed the last vestige of it. For if Jesus really did believe, as Schweitzer asserts, that the Kingdom of God would come in an apocalyptic fashion, first at the harvest-time before the twelve apostles returned from their preaching mission, and then later immediately following His own death, He was mistaken in both cases. The glorious Messianic consciousness, which Schweitzer claims to have restored to Him, is so linked with the Kingdom which was not, and still is not, realized, that it can hardly be considered a basis for heroic greatness. And

1. Quest, pp. 397-398, the last sentence altered to conform to the more recent German edition, p. 632.

2. Sketch, p. 274.

if He were mistaken about these matters which lay at the heart and core of what He believed and taught and lived and died for, then what assurance is there that He was right about anything else, even His expectation to be the Messiah? That He should have been mistaken about some minor detail would not destroy His authority in the fundamentals of the Christian religion. For instance, if it could be proved that He shared the belief of His contemporaries that the earth was flat, that would not prevent us from trusting in Him for salvation from sin, or following His ethical teachings. But if the Kingdom of God, in the apocalyptic sense, was the aim and purpose of His whole human existence, then its failure to appear nullifies what He stood for, and He is proved, to say the least, unreliable. These considerations have caused many to take serious offence at Schweitzer's work.*

Schweitzer was well aware that his views might cause offence. He sought to guard against it in Das Abendmahlsproblem, in the preface of which he compares the fate of Grafe and Schleiermacher, who held similar views about the Last Supper, but one was condemned for his views, while the other was praised for his, and remarks:

> "Es ist merkwürdig: In der Theologie darf heutzutage einer fast alles sagen, was er will, wenn er es nur vornehm und geistreich mit einem gewissen eleganten Skeptizismus thut. Für den ehrlichen Menschen, der redet, weil sein Gewissen ihn zwingt, ist man aber unnachsichtlich."[1]

Later on, he defends himself by this paragraph:

> "Diese kurzen Andeutungen mögen zeigen, dass diese Arbeit in einem praktisch aufbauenden und versöhnenden Geiste geschrieben ist. Zwar wird man, von den gewohnten Auffassungen herkommend, zunächst mannigfach an dieser Untersuchung Anstoss nehmen, da sie die Versöhnung nicht durch

1. Das Abendmahlsproblem, p. vii.

* For a fuller treatment of this matter, see p. 152 f.

> eine neue Vermengung oder Verdunkelung, sondern einzig und allein durch geschichtliche Wahrhaftigkeit und Unbefangenheit herbeiführen will."[1]

In other words, he is trying to lay the blame on history, which drives him to his conclusions. The "postscript" to the Sketch, in which he sets forth the aim of that book - to restore Jesus' overwhelming heroic greatness - is written in the same spirit.

> "The judgments passed upon this realistic account of the life of Jesus may be very diverse, according to the dogmatic, historical, or literary point of view of the critics. Only with the aim of the book may they not find fault."[2]

But by the time he came to write the Quest, his attitude had changed somewhat. Here he makes such a statement as this:

> "We must be prepared to find that the historical knowledge of the personality and life of Jesus will not be a help, but perhaps even an offence to religion."[3]

He points out that others before him have given offence, and adds:

> "They advanced the study of the subject more than all the others put together. But for the offence which they gave, the science of historical theology would not have stood where it does today."[4]

One even wonders if he may not be referring to himself by implication in these remarkable sentences:

> "We have not yet arrived at any reconciliation between half-way history and half-way thought. What the ultimate goal towards which we are moving will be, what this something is which shall bring new life and new regulative principles to coming centuries, we do not know. We can only dimly divine that it will be the mighty deed of some mighty original genius, whose truth and rightness will be proved by the fact that we, working at our poor half thing, will oppose him might and main - we who imagine we long for nothing more

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1. Das Abendmahlsproblem, p. xi.

2. Sketch, p. 274.

3. Quest, p. 399.

4. ibid., p. 5.

> eagerly than a genius powerful enough to open up with authority a new path for the world, seeing that we cannot succeed in moving it forward along the track which we have so laboriously prepared."[1]

In any case, there can be no doubt that in Schweitzer's view the "modern-liberal" theology did less than justice to Jesus. He had indeed been freed from the bonds of dogma, but now modern theology was trying to make its own bonds to hold Him in our time.

> "There was a danger that we should offer them a Jesus Who was too small, because we had forced Him into conformity with our human standards and human psychology. . . . . It is nothing less than a misfortune for modern theology that it mixes history with everything and ends by being proud of the skill with which it finds its own thoughts - . . in Jesus, and represents Him as expressing them."[2]

In the later edition of the Quest, he puts it even more strongly, and calls it "historical scholasticism":

> "Wer zu Anfang der neunziger Jahre des letzten Jahrhunderts - zur Zeit als die Richtung der Fahrt definitiv festgelegt wurde - in die Theologie eintrat und ein nüchternes Urteil bewahrte, hatte das beängstigende Empfinden, dass der Unterricht der zukünftigen Geistlichen seinem Wesen nach in der Hauptsache aus kritischer Geschichtsscholastik bestand, in der sie zwar zu historischem Forschen und Urteilen erzogen, im übrigen aber, da Geschichte eben alles war, religiös verbildet wurden."[3]

Thus, when Schweitzer speaks of restoring to Jesus His lost greatness, he means that he has contributed to the downfall of that "liberal" view which belittled Him:

> "It was no small matter, therefore, that in the course of the critical study of the Life of Jesus, after a resistance lasting for two generations, during which first one expedient was tried and then another, theology was forced by genuine history to begin to doubt the artificial his-

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1. Quest, p. 2.

2. ibid., pp.398-399.

3. Quest, later German edition, p. 509.

> tory with which it had thought to give new life to our Christianity, and to yield to the facts which, as Wrede strikingly said, are sometimes the most radical critics of all. History will force it to find a way to transcend history, and to fight for the lordship and rule of Jesus over this world with weapons tempered in a different forge."[1]

It will be objected at this point that in destroying the "modern" Jesus, Schweitzer gives us an "eschatological" Jesus who is no greater. Schweitzer is aware of this difficulty, and sets out to deal with it:

> "The historical foundation of Christianity as built up by rationalistic, by liberal, and by modern theology no longer exists; but that does not mean that Christianity has lost its historical foundation. The work which historical theology thought itself bound to carry out, and which fell to pieces just as it was nearing completion, was only the brick facing of the real immovable historical foundation which is independent of any historical confirmation or justification.
>
> "Jesus means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from Him and flows through our time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any historical discovery. It is the solid foundation of Christianity."[2]

So the "historical Jesus", whom he has taken such pains to describe, is after all not so important. Yet he does not differentiate, as Strauss had done, between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Strauss sought, by Hegelian dialectic, to show that

> "Godmanhood, the highest idea conceived by human thought, is actually realized in the historic personality of Jesus."[3]

But Schweitzer is a follower of Kant, not Hegel, and to him the relationship is quite different. To express this relationship is the purpose of the concluding chapter of the Quest. He apparently realized that he had not made himself quite clear in the first edition.

1. Quest, p. 399.

2. ibid., p. 397.

3. Quest, p. 79. For Schweitzer's discussion of this point made by Strauss, see Quest, pp.114-115.

For in the second, he rewrote a whole section, replacing two pages of the earlier edition by more than nine in the later one.[1]

In the first edition, Schweitzer explains it this way:

> "It is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it. Not the historical Jesus, but the spirit which goes forth from Him and in the spirits of men strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world.
>
> "It is not given to history to disengage that which is abiding and eternal in the being of Jesus from the historical forms in which it worked itself out, and to introduce it into our world as a living influence. It has toiled in vain at this undertaking. As a water-plant is beautiful so long as it is growing in the water, but once torn from its roots, withers and becomes unrecognisable, so it is with the historical Jesus when He is wrenched loose from the soil of eschatology, and the attempt is made to conceive Him 'historically' as a Being not subject to temporal conditions. The abiding and eternal in Jesus is absolutely independent of historical knowledge and can only be understood by contact with His spirit which is still at work in the world. In proportion as we have the Spirit of Jesus we have the true knowledge of Jesus.
>
> "Jesus as a concrete historical personality remains a stranger to our time, but His spirit, which lies hidden in His words, is known in simplicity, and its influence is direct. Every saying contains in its own way the whole Jesus. The very strangeness and unconditionedness in which He stands before us makes it easier for individuals to find their own standpoint in regard to Him."[2]

But only in the second edition does he give the key to this spiritual relationship. It is a matter of the <u>will</u>, which is not affected by the passage of time and the change of circumstances:

> "Every full view of life, cosmic philosophy, <u>Weltanschauung</u> (the German word it is impossible to translate) contains side by side elements which are conditioned by the age as well as others which are unconditioned, for

1. PP. 399 (3rd paragraph) to 401 (2nd paragraph) of the English edition are replaced by pp. 633 (last paragraph) to 642 (2nd paragraph) of the later German edition. Much of this material is quoted by Lowrie in the translator's introduction to the English edition of the <u>Sketch</u>, and this translation is used frequently in the next few pages of this thesis.

2. <u>Quest</u>, English ed., pp.399-400.

> it consists in the very fact that a penetrating will has pervaded and constituted the conceptual material furnished it by history. This latter is subjected to change. Hence there is no Weltanschauung, however great and profound it may be, which does not contain perishable material. But the will itself is timeless. It reveals the unsearchable and primary nature of a person and determines also the final and fundamental definition of his Weltanschauung. May the conceptual material alter never so much, with consequent diversity between the new Weltanschauung and the old, yet these in reality only lie just so far apart as the wills which constitute them diverge in direction."[1]

The "historical Jesus" expressed His timeless will in the eschatological terminology of the time in which He lived on earth simply because as a man living then, He thought in those terms. We live in quite a different age, and our whole thought-world is different. That is why the historical Jesus seems so alien to us. And it is dangerous to try to translate from His thought-world into ours.

> "Jesus' deed consists in the fact that His original and profound moral nature took possession of the late-Jewish eschatology and so gives expression, in the thought material of His age, to the hope and the will which are intent upon the ethical consummation of the world. All attempts to avert one's vision from this Weltanschauung as a whole and to make Jesus' significance for us to consist in His revelation of the 'fatherhood of God', the 'brotherhood of man', and so forth, must therefore of necessity lead to a narrow and peculiarly insipid conception of His religion. In reality He is an authority for us, not in the sphere of knowledge, but only in the matter of the will."[2]

Schweitzer makes a good deal of the will as the only possible bridge between Jesus' time and ours:

> "Es handelt sich um ein Verstehen von wille zu Wille, bei dem das Wesentliche der Weltanschauung unmittelbar gegeben ist. Ein ins Kleine gehendes Scheiden zwischen vergänglichem und Bleibendem in seiner Erscheinung und seiner Verkündigung ist unnötig. Wie von selbst übersetzen sich seine worte in die Form, die sie in unserem Vorstellungsmaterial annehmen müssen. Viele, die auf den ersten Blick

1. Quest, Ger.ed., p. 634, translated in Sketch, Eng.ed., pp 46-47.

2. ibid., pp.635-636, translated in Sketch, Eng.ed., pp.49-50.

> fremd anmuten, werden in einem tiefen und ewigen Sinne auch für uns wahr, wenn man der Gewalt des Geistes, der aus ihnen redet, nicht Eintrag zu tun sucht. Fast möchte man gegen die Sorgen, wie seine Verkündigung für moderne Menschen verständlich und lebendig gemacht werden könnte, sein Wort 'Trachtet am ersten nach dem Reiche Gottes und nach seiner Gerechtigkeit, so wird euch dies alles zufallen' in Erinnerung bringen."[1]

So Schweitzer renounces all attempts to explain what Jesus' message for our time must be, and falls back upon mysticism:

> "In the last resort, our relationship to Jesus is of a mystical sort. No personality of the past can be installed in the present by historical reflection or by affirmations about His authoritative significance. We get into relation with Him only when we are brought together in the recognition of a common will, experience a clarification, enrichment, and quickening of our will by His, and find ourselves in Him. In this sense every deeper relationship between men is of a mystical sort. Our religion, therefore, so far as it proves itself specifically Christian, is not so much 'Jesus-cult' as 'Jesus-mystic'."[2]

Schweitzer has himself achieved this mystical relationship to Jesus in his own personal religious life. This appears clearly in his understanding of Paul's relationship to Christ as expressed in his Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, though even in the Pauline work he finds an eschatological motive which is now no longer tenable. But his mysticism is strong enough to be the answer to the problem which has often been seen in his life: how is it possible for one who believed Jesus to have been so thoroughly mistaken about the time and manner of the manifestation of the Kingdom of God still to be such a great Christian as to give up all the earthly success which he enjoyed as a musician, a philosopher, and a theologian. to go to live a life of sacrificial service among largely unappreciative African natives? He could, and did, because Christ

1. Quest, Ger.ed., p. 639, not translated in Sketch, Eng.ed.
2. Quest, Ger.ed., p. 641, translated in Sketch, Eng.ed., pp.55-56.

means so much more to him than the "historical Jesus". This is what he is trying to express in the oft-quoted concluding paragraph of the Quest, which is the same in both editions:

> "He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lake-side, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: 'Follow thou Me!' and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill in our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is . . . "[1]

To sum up, then, history, according to Schweitzer, is a most valuable tool for theology, if confined to its proper use. In a metaphor of the sort which he so frequently uses, it is a sharp-edged tool like the scalpel, which is of such value in surgery. But it is a cutting tool. Of itself it cannot heal any disease. It can only enable the surgeon to reach an infected part and remove it. After that, the surgeon may stitch up the wound, and may apply medicine, but in the last analysis it is God who heals the incision, and effects the cure.[2]

2. Schweitzer's historical method.

While Schweitzer was, as we have seen, a firm believer in the "critical-historical" method into which, so to speak, he was born, yet his own individual application of it has some remarkable features which deserve further examination. For Schweitzer is an in-

1. Quest, p. 401.

2. For a more recent, broader interpretation of history, see Dodd's History and the Gospel, esp. pp. 11ff., 25ff., 166ff., 131-132. Dodd observes a revolt against the 'historicism' represented by Schweitzer and the theologians he so much admired, and insists that history includes not only the facts which took place in the past, but also the meaning they have for us today.

dependent, creative thinker, and could not be bound by any school of thought. He soon found himself dissatisfied with many of the findings of the liberal school. This dissatisfaction drove him to be as critical of liberalism as liberalism itself was critical of orthodoxy, and to what can only be described as a certain glee at the victory he felt he had achieved over the "liberal-historical" view of the life of Jesus. This attitude is most obvious in chapter XIX of the Quest, where he describes how

> "the literary and the eschatological view, which have hitherto been marching parallel, on either flank, to the advance of modern theology, have now united their forces, brought theology to a halt, surrounded it, and compelled it to give battle."[1]

Even more supercilious is the suggestion further on that

> "Modern historical theology . . . is warned that the dyke is letting in water and sends a couple of masons to repair the leak; as if the leak did not mean that the whole masonry is undermined, and must be rebuilt from the foundation."[2]

On top of this, his third metaphor is quite gratuitous:

> "Theology comes home to find the broker's marks on all the furniture and goes on as before quite comfortably, ignoring the fact that it will lose everything if it does not pay its debts."[3]

Theology's big mistake, according to Schweitzer, is not its scientific method, but the fact that it did not carry it to its logical conclusion. Its results are unsatisfactory because they raise as many problems as they solve. In this same chapter XIX of the Quest, he lists two full pages of these unsolved problems. In eleven paragraphs, 48 sentences in all, only two do not end with a question-mark, and these are quotations from Wrede.[4]

1. Quest, p. 329.
2. ibid., p. 329.
3. Quest, p. 330.
4. ibid., pp.334-336.

This tour de force is, in fact, quite typical of Schweitzer. He seems to have a special gift for discovering unsolved problems. He tracks them down with all the zest of the hero of a mystery novel hunting for clues. And he shows the most amazing skill in fitting them all together until he forms of them some apparently insoluble dilemma. From this point of view, Das Abendmahlsproblem is a most fascinating piece of work.[1] Here the dilemma is: whichever is stressed, the fact that Jesus took bread and wine and offered them as His body and His blood, or the fact that the disciples shared in the elements, no satisfactory explanation can be made for both the original Last Supper and the celebration of communion in the early church.[2] Then, having stated the problem in these terms. Schweitzer solves it in his own characteristic fashion, He makes an entirely new supposition, that the comparison of the bread and wine with the body and blood of Jesus is only secondary, and that the supper was intended as a sort of pre-celebration of the Messianic banquet in the Kingdom of God, whereby the disciples who partook were made in a special sense members of the Kingdom, so that they would have a place at the real Messianic meal when it took place. This seems to Schweitzer to explain both the original Last Supper and also the fact that the early church continued to celebrate it even though Jesus gave them no specific command to do so. It is just as neat as that![3]

Similarly, the sketch is a solution to a practically insoluble

1. See above, pp. 12-13.

2. Das Abendmahlsproblem, pp.37ff.

3. But see below, p. 131.

problem:

> "The last years of research have revealed on what slight grounds our historical conception of the life of Jesus really rests. It cannot be concealed that we are confronted by a difficult antinomy. Either Jesus really took himself to be the Messiah, or (as a new tendency of the study now seems to suggest) this dignity was first ascribed to him by the early Church. In either case, the "Life of Jesus" remains equally enigmatical."[1]

The whole preface is the statement of this problem. And Schweitzer solves it by

> "commencing not at the beginning, but in the middle, with the thought of the Passion."[2]

This leads him to his eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus, with its three secrets, the Mystery of the Kingdom of God, the Mystery of the Messiahship, and the Mystery of the Passion. Again the riddle is declared solved: the reason Jesus did not seem to believe Himself to be the Messiah, although the early Church ascribed that dignity to Him from the first, is that He did not make a public claim to it, because He understood it in an anticipatory sense - He was not yet the Messiah, but would be revealed as such when He came on the clouds of Heaven at the coming of the Kingdom. But the secret became known, first at the transfiguration to Peter, James and John, then by Peter's confession to all the twelve, and finally through Judas' betrayal to the high priest, who used it to condemn Jesus to death for blasphemy.

Schweitzer's solutions are so ingenious and startling, and claim to explain so many problems, that one's first natural reaction is to doubt them, or at best to accept them with extreme

1. Sketch, pp.3-4.
2. ibid., p. 3.

caution and reserve. But Schweitzer has no fear of logical consequences. Once he has found the "key" to his dilemma, he goes on to apply it to every detail. For him this is just being "thoroughgoing".[1] It is just pressing things to their ultimate logical conclusions. That is why his treatment of the "modern-liberal" view seems so much like a reductio ad absurdum. Even the fact that the result may seem absurd does not deter him. In this he considers himself a true disciple of Kant, for he quotes in the Sketch, the following paragraph from the Critique of Practical Reason:

> "Let it be the maxim in every scientific investigation for one to pursue undisturbed the due course of it with all possible exactitude and frankness, not considering what it may collide with outside of its own field, but following it out, so far as one can, truly and completely for itself alone. Frequent observation has convinced me that when one has brought this task to an end, that which in the midst of it appeared to me for the time being very questionable with respect to other teaching outside, if only I closed my eyes to this questionableness and attended merely to my task till it was finished, finally in unexpected wise proved to be in perfect agreement with those very teachings, - though the truth had presented itself without the least reference to those teachings, without partiality and prejudice for them."[2]

This principle even seems at times to colour Schweitzer's historical criteria. For instance, he begins the last chapter of Das Abendmahlsproblem with this statement:

> "Authentisch ist ein Bericht, welcher in keiner Weise durch die Vorstellung von der Gemeindefeier beeinflusst ist. Der Markusbericht ist authentisch, weil sich dieser Nachweis für ihn führen lässt."[3]

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1. The German word is konsequent, which implies not only thoroughness, but necessary causation as well.

2. Critique of Practical Reason, Ger.ed., p. 129, footnote, quoted in Sketch, Eng.ed., pp.120-121.

3. Das Abendmahlsproblem, p. 56.

This seems to say, "That record is historical which fits my theory." One sometimes finds that attitude in practice among his predecessors, but never stated as a principle. Actually, a closer study of the three preceding chapters, in which he has been studying the records, reveals that Schweitzer is not here stating a principle, but a conclusion, following a recognized principle of textual criticism: that the authentic record is the one which is hardest to explain.

Similarly, in the preface to the Sketch, he lays down the criterion:

> "Only that conception is historical which makes it intelligible how Jesus could take Himself to be the Messiah without finding Himself obliged to make this consciousness of His tell as a factor in His public ministry for the Kingdom of God, - rather, how He was actually compelled to make the Messianic dignity of His person a secret!"[1]

This certainly seems to beg the question. But again the impression is created by citing the sentence out of context. What Schweitzer is trying to do here is to find the "key" to the problem, and define it, not to state a general principle applicable to all historical research.

Nevertheless, this trenchant, almost blunt, way of expressing himself is at least one reason why Schweitzer met with so much opposition. He himself is so surely convinced of the power of reason and the inevitable discovery of truth, pleasant or unpleasant, that he takes no pains to make his theories palatable to his readers. Lowrie suggests this in his translator's introduction to the Sketch:

> "Unquestionably it is no easy matter to assimilate so novel and striking a view as that of Schweitzer. To bring it into relation with the presuppositions of our religious view in general involves demolition and reconstruction - a labour heavy and grievous to the soul. The mind instinct

1. Sketch, p. 6.

> tively recoils from such a labour and is fain to protect itself by a general repudiation and denial. Moreover the author has presented his view with a naked simplicity which, while it renders it easier to understand and more difficult to confute, makes it also, one must confess, more difficult to accept. We are not inclined to accept opinions in the face of a display of force, and as it were at the muzzle of a gun - even when the gun is loaded with logic."[1]

He especially objects to the implication

> "that every trait of Jesus' life and teaching was coloured by it (i.e., eschatology) and that He Himself was so obsessed by a single idea that He was unable to see things as they are. This is precisely what the Gospels do not permit us to believe. It is manifest that Jesus had a peculiarly acute sensibility to His surroundings, whether it were nature or human society, and responded feelingly, spontaneously. His sense of right and wrong is so clearly intuitive that He could deal sovereignly with the Law."[2]

Yet at the same time one cannot help admiring the drive of Schweitzer's logic. It brooks no resistance, simply because he is so confident of his "practical reason".

This is all the more remarkable when one considers Schweitzer's own estimate of his premises, and the experimental nature of his research. In his careful statement of "The Problem" in the first chapter of the Quest, he makes this quite clear:

> "The problem of the life of Jesus has no analogue in the field of history. . . . The standards of ordinary historical science are here inadequate, its methods not immediately applicable. The historical study of the life of Jesus has had to create its own methods for itself. . . . All that can be done is to experiment continuously, starting from definite assumptions; and in this experimentation the guiding principle must ultimately rest upon historical intuition."[3]

This is, in essence, Schweitzer's method, as he considers it also that of his predecessors. The "historical intuition" on which he depends is a new element beyond the bounds of pure reason, though

1. Sketch, Eng. ed., p. 37.
2. ibid., pp.38-39.
3. Quest, p. 6.

not perhaps beyond the limits of what he considers admissible in the Kantian practical reason.[1] Now the experimental method is, of course, an approved scientific method, and it had led, in other fields, to important advances in scientific knowledge. We might therefore expect that it would yield valuable results in the study of the life of Jesus as well. An experiment can be judged, however, only by its results. There must be some adequate standard by which to determine whether it has succeeded or not. This standard is usually other knowledge in the same field previously and independently acquired. And until the results of the experiment have thus been carefully checked, the scientific procedure is to consider them hypothetical, because they are based on an unproved theory. Schweitzer's "historical intuitions" are such unproved theories unless and until they can be proved by their results. He is right in demanding that they be carried to their logical conclusions, but not in assuming that such a procedure of itself guarantees the truth of the theories on which it is based. His mistake is therefore not in his experimental method, but in the certainty he claims for his results.

He relies very largely on these "historical intuitions" for the discovery of the "keys" by which he solves his fundamental problems. Ratter, in his Albert Schweitzer, calls him"one of the Illuminati", and points out:

> "Though his scholarship is profound, also provocative, his true claim to be heard is that primarily he is a visionary, a mystic, giving form and scholarship to his illuminations. This can be most readily proven, for all his major

1. See quotation from Kant above, p. 63.

> books are the working out of an illumination. His understanding of Bach as a tone painter came to him as a very young man; a flash of intuitive insight gave him his understanding of Jesus and Paul, before he was aged twenty-three; his conviction that we are a generation of camp-followers, Epigoni, came to him suddenly in the course of conversation when he was aged twenty-four; his mystic formula 'Reverence for Life' with its key-word 'responsibility' was given as a revelation in Africa. . . . . But though he is a mystic subject to illuminations, his scholarship should not be discounted: though secondary in him frequently it is equal to the scholarship of others."[1]

Schweitzer's own description of how he discovered the phrase "Reverence for Life", which is the "key" to his ethics, shows clearly how he depended on this intuition or illumination. Again he was up against a seemingly insoluble problem, and for months as he worked as a mission doctor in Africa, his mind cast about for a solution. Then, one evening, as he sat on the deck of a barge which was taking him to patients up the Ogowe River, it came to him:

> "Lost in thought I sat on the deck of the barge, struggling to find the elementary and universal conception of the ethical which I had not discovered in any philosophy. Sheet after sheet I covered with disconnected sentences, merely to keep myself concentrated on the problem. Late on the third day, at the moment when, at sunset, we were making our way through a herd of hippopotamuses, there flashed upon my mind, unforeseen and unsought, the phrase, 'Reverence for Life'. The iron door had yielded: the path in the thicket had become visible. Now I had found my way to the idea in which world- and life-affirmation and ethics are contained side by side! Now I knew that the world-view of ethical world- and life-affirmation, together with its ideals of civilisation, is founded in thought!"[2]

The "key" to the eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus had been discovered years before in a similar manner.[3] Having

1. Magnus C. Ratter, Albert Schweitzer, pp. 237-238. In the sentences omitted above, Ratter cites no less than eight separate "illuminations" which Schweitzer records in his autobiographical writings, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, and My Life and Thought.

2. My Life and Thought, pp. 185-186.

3. see above, pp. 2-3.

come to an impasse on the meaning of Jesus' life as recorded by Mark, he found the "key" in the speeches of Jesus recorded by Matthew: the commission to the twelve when they were first sent out two by two, in Matthew 10; and the reply to the messengers of John the Baptist in chapter 11.* He noticed that Jesus seemed to expect the Kingdom to come in an apocalyptic form, with Himself revealed as Messiah, before the disciples returned from their mission. All the rest of the eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus has been worked out from that basis.

Yet it must be admitted that once Schweitzer has his "key", he is as rigorously logical as possible in the application of it to the problem, and the resulting solution. And it is remarkable how many problems of detail in the text seem to fall into line with the solution of the main problem.

Schweitzer also admits an awareness of the difficulties involved

> "in the nature of the sources of the life of Jesus, and in the character of our knowledge of the contemporary religious world of thought."[1]

He makes some very damaging concessions on both counts.

With regard to the sources:

> "We have not the materials for a complete life of Jesus, but only for a picture of His public ministry."[2]

Yet he asserts:

> "There are few characters of antiquity about whom we possess so much indubitably historical information, of whom we have so many authentic discourses. . . . Jesus stands immediately

1. Quest, p. 6.

2. ibid., p. 6.

* For a more detailed criticism of Schweitzer's treatment of these passages, see appended note, p. 107a.

> before us, because He was depicted by simple Christians without literary gifts."[1]

Thus one of his premises is the accuracy of the gospel records. On this point he separates himself from the "sceptical school", of whom Wrede was the latest. As a student of Holtzmann, he could not fail to be influenced by the Marcan hypothesis, which he defines as

> "the theory that Mark's gospel is the oldest, and that its plan underlies those of Matthew and Luke. That seemed to justify the conclusion that the activities of Jesus can be understood from Mark's gospel only."[2]

This relegated Matthew and Luke to a secondary position which Schweitzer could not accept, for, in the first place, the Marcan hypothesis had been the basis of a spate of unsatisfactory "liberal" lives of Jesus, and in the second place, Schweitzer's own eschatological view depends, as we have just seen, on Matthew 10 and 11 to explain Mark. Yet he does accept the Synoptic, and essentially the Marcan, plan of the life of Jesus as against the Johannine[3], and finds his main difficulty in the lack of connection between the events as recorded by Mark. For history, as Schweitzer understands it, is the record of events with a view to establishing the causal relation between them.[4] Yet

> "from these materials we can only get a Life of Jesus with yawning gaps. How are these gaps to be filled? At the worst with phrases, at the best with historical imagination. There is really no other means of arriving at the order and inner connection of the facts of the life of Jesus than the making and testing of hypotheses."[5]

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1. Quest, p. 6.
2. My Life and Thought, p. 17.
3. See Quest, pp. 6-7.
4. See above, p. 47.
5. Quest, p. 7.

Again the method must be experimental. Again a "key" is needed! It must explain not only the outward connection between events, but also the inner connection, by explaining the problems of Jesus' self-consciousness, and any development that may have taken place in it.[1] And with this is bound up His secrecy concerning the Messiahship which was later ascribed to Him, and His use of the term Son of Man. Thus early in the Quest Schweitzer is foreshadowing the solution which he has already discovered in the Sketch, the eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus, which so neatly and completely solves these problems, to his satisfaction at least.

In the course of the above discussion, however, he mentions in passing still another difficulty:

> "If the tradition preserved by the Synoptists really includes all that happened during the time that Jesus was with His disciples, the attempt to discover the connection (between the events of His life) must succeed sooner or later. It becomes more and more clear that this presupposition is indispensable to the investigation. If it is merely a fortuitous series of episodes that the Evangelists have handed down to us, we may give up the attempt to arrive at a critical reconstruction of the life of Jesus as hopeless."[2]

This is the most damaging admission of all. For necessary as this presumption may be, there is no way of establishing its truth, or even its probability. On the contrary, it seems most unlikely, for he has admitted in the previous paragraph:

> "While the Synoptics are only collections of anecdotes (in the best, historical sense of the word), the Gospel of John - as stands on record in its closing words - only professes to give a selection of the events and discourses."[3]

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1. Quest, p. 7.

2. ibid., p. 7.

3. ibid., p. 7.

But to suppose that the Synoptists give us all the events of His life is to make of John's Gospel a pure figment of the pious imagination of its author, for the larger part of the events recorded in John find no place in the Synoptic account at all. Yet Schweitzer feels himself constrained to make this supposition because of

> "the complete irreconcilability of the historical data."[1]

Thereby he believes he establishes the Synoptics, and especially Mark, as the useful basis of his research. And having disposed of this difficulty, he allows himself to be carried away with the neatness with which his solution disposes of certain problems of interpretation, and makes of the life of Jesus a compact, logical system. Indeed, he bids fair to carry away his reader as well. The serious impression which his writings have made is a tribute to the force with which he has been able to present his results, and the realisation that eschatology did actually play a larger part in the teachings of Jesus than his contemporaries were willing to admit.

Yet even on this very subject of eschatology he finds it necessary, at the beginning of the Quest, to point out grave difficulties. In order to be completely"historical", he assumes that Jesus is only human and subject to human motivation, so that

> "His personality is to some extent defined by the world of thought which it shares with its contemporaries."[2]

This is in itself an assumption that most scholars either overlooked or disdained to consider, for they felt that Jesus would be the master of His world, rather than subject to it. It is interesting

1. Quest, p. 6.

2. Quest, p. 8.

that Schweitzer, who claims to have restored Jesus' imperious authority, should be the one to insist on His dependence on the thought-world in which He lived. But even after stating this assumption, he is no better off, for he can find "no valid answer" to the question:

> "What was the nature of the contemporary Jewish world of thought?"[1]

Here again the gift for discovering problems finds an opportunity to exert itself. He mentions these:

> "We do not know whether the expectation of the Messiah was generally current or whether it was the faith of a mere sect. . . . If the eschatological hope was generally current, was it the prophetic or the apocalyptic form of that hope? . . . We know only the form of eschatology which meets us in the Gospels and in the Pauline epistles; that is to say, the form which it took in the Christian community in consequence of the coming of Jesus. . . . Even supposing we could obtain more exact information regarding the popular Messianic expectations at the time of Jesus, we should still not know what form they assumed in the self-consciousness of One who knew Himself to be the Messiah but held that the time was not yet come for Him to reveal Himself as such. . . . For the form of the Messianic self-consciousness of Jesus we have to fall back on conjecture."[2]

As we have already seen, this is the typical Schweitzer method - to state a problem with every conceivable difficulty, thus making it appear hopelessly insoluble.

> "Such is the character of the problem, and, as a consequence, historical experiment must here take the place of historical research."[3]

Yet by his "historical experiment" he is quite confident that he has solved it.

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1. Quest, p. 8.

2. ibid., pp. 8-9.

3. ibid., p. 9.

It should be remarked here that all this uncertainty about his premises, both sources and eschatology, which we have been considering in these last few pages, is brought out in the first, introductory, chapter of the Quest. Schweitzer is here stating the problem in general terms, not so much to explain how he faced it, as to show how the many scholars whose works he is about to review could arrive at such different conclusions about the life of Jesus. He will try to bring order out of chaos by judging them according to the contribution they make to its understanding and the solution of its problems. By the time he comes to his own work, eighteen chapters later, he apparently feels that these matters have been adequately dealt with, for he has no hesitation about affirming his own results as if they were proved. He seems to forget that his is also an "historical experiment", based on doubtful postulates, and solved by a clue arrived at by intuition.

This is not, however, to say that the eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus is entirely false. To do so would be to fall into one of the pit-falls of the "historical" German scholars, who so frequently reckoned that they had disproved a matter by casting doubt upon it, and had established a finding by showing its possibility or necessity to their theory. Schweitzer is one with them in this. For instance, his method of disposing of the "modern-historical" life of Jesus is to take the four assumptions he considers basic to it and to cast doubt upon them. This is the subject of the first chapter of the Sketch.[1]

1. The four assumptions are listed on pp. 63-64, then dealt with on the following pages, with a résumé on pp. 81-82.

The first of these assumptions is that Jesus' life falls into two periods, the first successful, when He preached to the multitudes in Galilee, the second unsuccessful, when He fled before the persecutions of the Pharisees and the Herodians, and finally came to the conclusion that He must suffer death at their hands for the sake of the Kingdom. Schweitzer deals with this by pointing out instances of failure in the first period, and of success in the second, thereby refuting the notion that the passion-idea was prompted by failure. Yet it is noteworthy that when Schweitzer tries to account for the passion-idea himself in chapter IX, he does so on the ground of a different kind of supposed failure - the failure of the Kingdom of God to appear at the time of the harvest, when Jesus sent out the twelve to preach.

> "Before the Kingdom could come the Affliction must arrive. But it failed to arrive. It must be brought about in order that the Kingdom may thus be constrained to come. . . . But now God does not bring the Affliction to pass. And yet the atonement must be made. Then it occurred to Jesus that He as the coming Son of Man must accomplish the atonement in His own person."[1]

Schweitzer thus substitutes a failure of God to live up to Jesus' expectations for the failure of Jesus to gain the support of the authorities.

In dealing with the second assumption - that the gospel writers in recording the idea of the Passion were somehow influenced by the Pauline doctrine of the atonement - Schweitzer falls back on a verbal distinction. In Das Abendmahlsproblem, he had noted that according to Mark and Matthew Jesus is reported to have spoken of His blood shed for many, while in Luke and Paul both the

1. Sketch, pp. 234-235.

body is broken and the blood is shed for you.[1] Now in the Sketch he uses this difference as grounds that Mark and Matthew are not dependent on Paul, since their reading cannot be derived from his, but his can from theirs.

The third assumption is the point where Schweitzer finds himself most at variance with the "modern-historical" view. The latter suggested that

> "the conception of the Kingdom of God as a self-fulfilling ethical society in which service is the highest law dominated the idea of the Passion."[2]

Schweitzer sees this as derived from the Lucan account of Jesus' remarks on service to the twelve when they had been quarreling about their positions in the Kingdom at the Last Supper.[3] His own eschatological view he finds in the "older Synoptists", Mark[4] and Matthew.[5] He then traces this same difference of aspect through other parallel passages, and substitutes the eschatological for the ethical understanding of the Kingdom on the ground that Mark and Matthew, being older, are more trustworthy than Luke, whose purpose is "literary".[6] This charge of "literary" intention, as a means of disposing of inconvenient evidence, is a favourite of the very "liberals" whose view Schweitzer here uses it to disprove. The idea seems to be that a writer who uses care

1. See Das Abendmahlsproblem, p. 51, top and bottom.
2. Sketch, p. 63.
3. Luke 22.24-27.
4. Mark 10.41-45.
5. Matthew 20.25-28.
6. The details can be found in the Sketch, pp.73-80.

in his treatment of his sources is more likely to embellish his report for literary effect, add therefore less likely to be historically reliable, than those who write more spontaneously. But even granting the lack in first-century writers of what we consider a critical historical sense, and their predilection for the marvelous, this argument would seem to be greatly overworked. The very fact that a man exercised care in his reporting should enhance, rather than diminish, the value of his evidence.

The fourth assumption which Schweitzer takes pains to refute is closely related to the third. Jesus cannot, he insists, have taught His disciples to understand the Kingdom ethically, because

> "He imparted to them the thought of the Passion, not in the form of an ethical reflection, but as a secret, without further explanation."[1]

This statement is to be proved in the following chapters of the book.

In each of these cases, Schweitzer's method is clearly apparent: first he states his disagreement with the "modern-historical" view, then lays claim to his own. But in each case, the criticism of the former is bound up with the assumption of the latter. To one who is not predisposed to the eschatological view, Schweitzer's assumptions are no stronger than those he is attacking. Only the forcefulness of his writing, and the logical way in which he builds on his assumptions, make his view seem the stronger.

Similarly, in the Quest, as he deals with first one and then another of those who preceded him, his own interpretation keeps colouring his judgment. This is quite unintentional, for he tries

1. Sketch, p. 81.

to be objective, and he succeeds to a degree. Yet even in these judgments, he feels the need of a "key":

> "There is really no common standard by which to judge the works with which we have to do. . . . But once one has accustomed oneself to look for certain definite landmarks amid this apparent welter of confusion one begins at last to discover in vague outline the course followed, and the progress made, by the critical study of the life of Jesus."[1]

He summarizes the main problem in this way:

> "While these discussions of the preliminary literary questions were in progress, the main historical problem of the life of Jesus was rising slowly into view. The question began to be mooted: what was the significance of eschatology for the mind of Jesus?"[2]

Thus for him the really important writers are not those whose "Lives" are longest or most orderly or most imposing, but those who raise the most pertinent problems, whether they succeed in solving them or not. Thus D. F. Strauss and Bruno Bauer are important as sceptics, foreshadowing Wrede, and Reimarus and Johannes Weiss as proponents of the eschatological view, foreshadowing Schweitzer. The only others to whom a whole chapter of the Quest is devoted are Paulus, the rationalist, and Renan, the French novelist. In the end it turns out that the whole Quest is setting the stage for Wrede and Schweitzer, and their combined attack upon the "liberal" view, followed by Schweitzer's criticism of Wrede, which leaves his own interpretation alone in the field.

This climax comes in the ~~next~~ second to last chapter of the Quest, where we find again the characteristic Schweitzerian historical method, with the slight variation that here two alternative "keys",

1. Quest, pp.9-10.
2. ibid., p. 10.

scepticism and eschatology, are offered, although in the end only the latter is found to solve all the problems. The great advantage of both these "keys", in Schweitzer's mind, is that they are applied in a "thoroughgoing" manner, pressing the original suppositions to their logical conclusions. This makes them more valid than the "liberal" view, which he accuses of temporizing. Both face up to the historical problems involved in a historical understanding of the life of Jesus, and offer solutions. But his final treatment of Wrede's and his own views in the points in which they differ is the usual one - he points out all the problems left unsolved by Wrede's sceptical theory, thereby disposing of it by casting doubt upon it, while he sees only the problems solved by the eschatological interpretation, thereby establishing it as preferable, and so the only true one.

A study of these two treatments will demonstrate how he does this. In criticising Wrede he passes judgments which are not substantiated. For instance, he finds fault with Wrede's suggestion that the early Christian community formed the Messianic tradition by such statements as this:

> "A creative tradition would have carried out the theory of the Messianic secret in the life of Jesus much more boldly and logically, that is to say, at once more arbitrarily and more consistently."[1]

But this presupposes that the early Christians had the same love of consistency and Konsequenz as Schweitzer himself. He then points out that Wrede finds two strains of tradition, in order to explain certain cases in which Jesus appears openly as Messiah,

1. Quest, p. 339.

in contrast to his "concealment" theory:

> "And these three facts are precisely the most important of all: Peter's confession, the Entry into Jerusalem, and the High Priest's knowledge of Jesus' Messiahship! In each case Wrede finds himself obliged to refer these to tradition instead of to the literary conception of Mark."[1]

But to whom are these facts the "most important of all"? To Schweitzer, because they fit his theory. It is just as reasonable for Wrede to feel that these are unimportant exceptions, because they do not fit his theory. Or again:

> "The positive difficulty which confronts the sceptical theory is to explain how the Messianic beliefs of the first generation arose, if Jesus, throughout His life, was for all, even for the disciples, merely a 'teacher', and gave even his intimates no hint of the dignity which He claimed for Himself."[2]

But who says Jesus claimed this for Himself? Again it is Schweitzer. Wrede makes the whole claim an invention of Mark and the early Church.

On the other hand, in defending his own views, Schweitzer asserts that:

> "Eschatology is simply 'dogmatic history' - history as moulded by theological beliefs - which breaks in upon the natural course of history and abrogates it. Is it not even a priori the only conceivable view that the conduct of one who looked forward to His Messianic 'Parousia' in the near future should be determined, not by the natural course of events, but by that expectation?"[3]

Certainly not a priori, for this is just what Schweitzer is trying to prove - that Jesus was subject to the eschatological beliefs of His time. To grant it a priori is to beg the question. A page later he is even bolder:

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1. Quest, p. 340.

2. ibid., p. 343.

3. ibid., p. 349.

> "Until they (those who assert a longer period of duration for the ministry of Jesus) have succeeded in proving it, we may assume something like the following course of events."[1]

Here it is in black and white! Schweitzer assumes the whole thing! Later, to be sure, he tries to substantiate many features of it, and show how reasonable it is, but his whole interpretation is based on an assumption. It is a "historical experiment", whose possibility he ably demonstrates, but not its truth, for that is not capable of demonstration.

But let it be repeated: to show the fallacy of Schweitzer's method is not to prove the falsity of his conclusions, any more than Schweitzer himself can prove their truth. The fact is, as he has so ably pointed out in the opening chapter of the Quest, we do not have the materials for a complete and cogent life of Jesus. What we do have is a series of incidents from His life, many of them isolated, from which we can learn a good deal about Him. And one of the things we learn is that eschatology colours the whole narrative, whether Jesus Himself believed in it, or whether it crept in because of the beliefs of His disciples. There is no harm in filling in the gaps with inspired imagination, provided we keep in mind that it is conjecture, and not proved truth. It can sometimes be raised to the level of probability, but never of historical certainty. In this sense, the "historical Jesus" is no longer possible to us. It is the fault of the nineteenth-century rationalism that so many really learned men should believe for so long that they could ultimately supply the missing facts out of their

1. Quest, p. 350.

heads by their own inductive and deductive reasoning.

3. More recent developments.

Since Schweitzer's Sketch and Quest appeared, a good deal has been written in the field of New Testament criticism. It is not the province of this thesis to review all of this literature, although indeed such a prolific student as Schweitzer might have done so, had not other interests, notably his missionary work, and his study of the philosophy of civilisation, taken all of his time. But there are several movements which have a direct bearing on his eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus, and with these we must deal.

a. Comparative religion.

The first of these is the attempt, in the name of comparative religion, to show that Jesus never really existed as a historical personality. Schweitzer had called Wrede's scepticism concerning the trustworthyness of Mark "thoroughgoing". Yet for all his scepticism, Wrede never suggested that the existence of Jesus was a fiction of Mark or of the primitive Christian community. It remained for other, even more "thoroughgoing" sceptics to do that.

Fortunately, most of the important works in this movement had appeared before Schweitzer revised his Quest, and the second edition of the Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung, in German, includes two chapters on the subject. In chapter XXII, Schweitzer traces the new scepticism from its origins in the writings of Dupuis and Volney, at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, down through the works of J. M. Robertson,

W. B. Smith, Arthur Drews, and others, which appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century. These latter he reviews in his usual thorough way, clearly stating the case of each one. Then in chapter XXIII, he deals with the whole movement, again in characteristic fashion, by raising four questions which he considers fundamental to it, and then dealing with each one in turn.

With his keen analytical mind, Schweitzer divides the movement into its two main branches:

> "Schon der oberflächlichen Betrachtung wird ersichtlich, dass die Bestreiter der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu nur in der Verneinung einig sind, im übrigem aber, was die Begründung der Theorie und die Erklärung des Aufkommens des Glaubens an einen geschichtlichen Jesus betrifft, in mannigfacher Weise voneinander abweichen. Der hauptsächlichste Unterschied besteht darin, dass nach den einen die in den Evangelien gezeichnete Gestalt die Gedanken, Prinzipien, und Erlebnisse der das Christentum hervorbringenden sozialen und religiösen Bewegung darstellt, während es sich nach den andern um die in einer bestimmten Phase der Entwicklung der Mythologie mit Notwendigkeit eintretende Vergeschichtlichung einer zentralen Vorstellung handelt."[1]

Schweitzer calls these the "symbolische" and the "mythische" respectively. The distinction between them affords the "key" to their understanding:

> "Da sie logisch und sachlich begründet ist und die Richtung der beiden sich kreuzenden Wege angibt, liefert sie den Schlüssel zum eigentlichen Wesen verschiedenen Lösungsversuche und erlaubt die vorgenommenen Operationen in ihrer Mannigfaltigkeit zu verstehen und auf eine klare Formel bringen."[2]

The mythical view is the older, going back to Dupuis and Volney. It was also the first to reappear at the turn of the century, in the works of J. M. Robertson. According to him, the whole basis of Christianity is myth, even the canonical Scriptures. He derives

1. Quest, Ger.ed., p. 447. 2. ibid., p. 447

his Christ from the widest and weirdest assortment of ancient myths, from"the early Semites and the pre-Christian Mexicans" to "the Druids about the beginning of the Christian era."[1] His fundamental assumption seems to be that if any gospel incident can be derived, even by the most far-fetched procedure, from any ancient religious source other than the New Testament, then the other source must be its origin; and when no such source is discoverable, then its existence must be assumed. Of one such piece of imaginary derivation - that the birth of Jesus was laid in Bethlehem because He is related to Adonis, and Jerome reports the existence of a shrine to Adonis there - Schweitzer points out that Jerome specifically introduces this information with the words "ab Hadriani temporibus", but adds, rather acidly,

> "aber das darf keine Rolle spielen, wo die Interesse der Mythologie in Frage kommen."[2]

Peter Jensen, on the other hand, tried to derive the whole of the Bible, the Old Testament as well as the New, from one ancient Babylonian myth about the heroes Gilgamesch and Engidu. The attempt is possible only because the source is badly mutilated, so that much of it must be reconstructed. Even so, the result is as far-fetched and forced as Robertson's.

Niemowski and Ruhrmann, independently, seek to derive the story of Jesus from astral mythology. Ruhrmann especially shows a wide range of familiarity with his sources, but again it is necessary to assume a growth and application of myth which cannot

1. J. M. Robertson, A Short History of Christianity, p. 29.
2. Quest, Ger. ed., p. 459, footnote.

be demonstrated.

Chief champion of the symbolic view is W. B. Smith. He assumes the existence of a "pre-Christian Jesus", in the sense that out of the pre-Christian world a Christian gnostic cult arose, with symbolic truth expressed in stories which were later taken literally, and thus came to be considered as historical incidents in the life of a historical personality. Smith does not work out his theory in detail - he claims as his excuse lack of time - but he gives many suggestions to indicate its direction, though not enough to prove or disprove it.

Arthur Drews, in his Christusmythe, advances theories which seem to fall into both categories. Schweitzer comments:

> "Dass der Stoff lebendig gruppiert ist und ein gewisser grosser Zug durch das Buch geht, müssen auch diejenigen anerkennen, die im Interesse der Wissenschaft eine gründlichere prinzipielle Behandlung der Frage gewünscht hätten und seinen flotten Erkundungritt zuletzt doch nicht als eine entscheidende strategische Operation anerkennen können."[1]

But Drews himself hardly seems to know where he stands. He gives up, in subsequent books, first the existence of Jesus, then the genuineness of all the Pauline letters, and with them the idea that Paul is responsible for making of Jesus an historical figure. This, to Schweitzer, is a sign of

> "die merkwürdige Unselbständigkeit und zugleich Prinzipienlosigkeit von Drews."[2]

How, then, did Jesus come to be regarded as historical? Drews is most vague about this, so that Schweitzer sums up:

> "Gerade diejenigen, die nicht darauf auggehen, mit Drews um Kleinigkeiten zu Rechnen, sondern mit ihm Probleme erfassen

1. Quest, Ger. ed., p. 491.

2. ibid., p. 493.

> und klären möchten, haben Mühe, die Enttäuschung die ihnen der zweite Teil der Christusmythe bereitet hat, zu unterdrücken und dürfen den Wunsch aussprechen, dass die Kardinalfrage endlich in Angriff genommen werde."[1]

Whittaker, Bolland, and Lublinski are also briefly mentioned.

Schweitzer does not believe any proper treatment of the whole subject had appeared before 1912, when he revised the Quest. The treatment on both sides had been too popular rather than scientific:

> "Die Bestreiter der Geschichtlichkeit des Nazareners . . . traten gleich zu Anfang herausfordernd auf, ohne von irgend einer Seite gereizt worden zu sein, und taten als ob sie allein den Mut hätten, die Stimme für die Wahrheit zu erheben, während 'die Theologen' aus Beschranktheit oder Aengstlichkeit noch an der Existenz Jesu festhielten und die natürlichen Konsequenzen der neuesten Forschungen nicht zu ziehen wagten."[2]

Therefore he undertakes to accomplish the task, and proceeds to analyze the problem:

> "In seiner Komplexität besteht das Problem aus vier Hauptfragen: einer religionsphilosophischen, einer religionsgeschichtlichen, einer dogmengeschichtlichen, und einer literarhistorischen."[3]

Each of these is then studied in detail.

His very statement of the first reveals a special interest in the question:

> "Welche Stellung nimmt, rein theoretisch betrachtet, die in den Evangelien geschilderte Persönlichkeit Jesu in der christlichen oder einer mehr oder weniger christlich gearteten Religion ein? Inwiefern ist sie deren Fundament oder Element? Welche Folgen müsste ihr eventueller Verlust nach sich ziehen, sei es dass die moderne Religiösität sie als unbefriedigend und fremdartig empfindet, sei es dass ihre Existenz überhaupt zweifelhaft wird?"[4]

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1. Quest, p. 496.
2. ibid., p. 500.
3. ibid., p. 503.
4. ibid., p. 503.

The possibility that the historical Jesus might prove irrelevant to present religious needs can only refer to his own eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus, which, as he had realized in the first edition of the Quest, made

> "the historical Jesus . . . to our time a stranger and an enigma."[1]

He is therefore as much interested in finding a philosophical basis for Christianity on account of his own reinterpretation of its founder as on account of the attacks made upon Him by Robertson, Smith, Drews, and their followers. This becomes still clearer when he writes:

> "Die religionsphilosophische Frage hat es also mit den beiden extremen Fällen zu tun, dass Jesus für die moderne Religiösität nicht existieren könnte, entweder weil er nicht gelebt hat oder aber, weil er sich als zu historisch erweisst."[2]

By this twist, he allies himself with the deniers of Jesus' historicity against "modern theology" in much the same way that he had earlier allied himself with Wrede's scepticism, not because he agrees with them, but in order that "theology" may come to itself and mend its ways.

> "Schliesslich ist es mit den geistigen Bewegungen wie mit den Menschen: sie müssen durch Demütigungen hindurch, um zu wächsen und zu reifen. Das einzige, worauf es ankommt, ist, dass die moderne Theologie zur Selbsterkenntnis komme, ihr unnatürliches Wesen ablege, und wirklick wieder 'freisinnig' werde, um zur Erfüllung der grossen Mission, zu der sie berufen ist, tuchtig zu sein."[3]
> "Und dennoch muss zuletzt alles gut und segensvoll ausgehen, wenn die moderne Theologie auf ihre Festigung und

1. Quest, Eng. ed., p. 397.

2. Quest, Ger. ed., p. 517.

3. Quest, Ger. ed., p. 514.

> Verinnerliching bedacht ist und sich zu schlichter und tiefer Wahrhaftigkeit erzieht."[1]

But so far, none of the contenders has done this adequately. It was this failure, with the horrible resulting decadence of civilisation, which led Schweitzer out of the field of New Testament research, and into that of the Philosophy of Civilisation which has become, all his biographers agree, his most important written contribution to mankind.

The second question he defines thus:

> "Religionsgeschichtlich ist zu erwägen, ob es an der Wende der Zeitrechnung eine orientalisch-griechisch-judische, synkretistische Bewegung gegeben haben kann, die die Idee eines sterbenden und auferstehenden Erlösergottes dachte und dann dazu fortschritt, ihm eine historische Existenz beizulegen, wie sie in den Evangelien geschildert ist."[2]

In dealing with it, he shows how unsatisfactory are the imaginary reconstructions of those who postulate a pre-Christian gnosticism. He convicts them of unscientific confusion in their use of terms, their chronology of religious history, and their description of the relationship, causal and derivative, of Christianity as a historical movement to the other religions of ancient times.

This leads to the third question:

> "Das dogmengeschichtliche Problem hat es zunächst mit dem Verhältnis des wirklichen Christentums zum wirklichen Gnostizismus zu tun."[3]

The differences he points out between the two far exceed the likenesses adduced to form the basis of the mythological and symbolical theories. So he concludes that

> "Der vorchristliche Gnostizismus ist ein tückischer

1. Quest, Ger.ed., p. 515.
2. ibid., p. 503.
3. ibid., p. 541.

> Wucherer. Denen, die ihn um Material zur Erklärung der Entstehung des Urchristentums angehen, streckt er bereitwilligst alles Gewünschte vor. Aber sobald sie sich mit der kontrollierbaren Geschichte einlassed, fordert er alsbald alles mit Zinsen und Zinseszinsen zurück, da seine Wechsel vom historischen Christentum und vom wirklichen Gnostizismus nicht honoriert werden."[1]

As to the fourth:

> "Die literarhistorische Frage fordert den sachlichen Entscheid, ob die Berichte der Evangelien sich als Ueberlieferungen von dem Wirken einer geschichtlichen spätjüdischen Persönlichkeit erklären lassen oder ob Kunstprodukte - zu Geschichte erstarrte Mythen oder symbolische Erzählungen - anzunehmen sind."[2]

He points out that the more conventional theologians are having their troubles with the texts, and how inconclusive are most of their efforts to determine which texts are genuine and which are not. But then he goes on to point out that the suppositions of their opponents make them even harder to explain:

> "Solange Smith, Robertson, Drews und ihre Anhänger sich mit der modernen Theologie auseinandersetzen, ist ihre Position also insofern nicht ungünstig, als sie auf offenbare Fehler hinweisen und sich als die konsequenten Geister ausgeben können. Ganz anders gestaltet sich die Lage aber, sobald sie ihre eigene Ansicht aus den Texten begründen sollen. Hier zeigt sich alsbald, dass sie die Fehler, die sie ihren Gegner vorwerfen, selber in hervorragendem Masse besitzen und Behauptungen aufstellen, dis sich noch weniger rechtfertigen lassen als diejenigen, die sie widerlegt haben."[3]

So Schweitzer's final conclusion with regard to the whole movement is the terse judgment:

> "Es ist also zu schliessen, dass die Annahme, Jesus habe existiert, überaus wahrscheinlich, ihr Gegenteil aber überaus unwahrscheinlich ist."[4]

And there, in the realm of probability, he leaves the matter, just as he was obliged to leave the eschatological Jesus.

1. Quest, Ger.ed., pp. 542-543.
2. ibid., p. 504.
3. ibid., p. 557.
4. ibid., p. 564.

b. Form-Criticism.

A second development which has changed the theological outlook with regard to the historical approach to the life and teachings of Jesus is that known as Form-Criticism. It is ironical to note that German theology, faced by Wrede and Schweitzer with the necessity of taking account of the eschatological element in the Gospels[1], has followed Wrede rather than Schweitzer.

The difference between the two was that Wrede attributed the eschatological passages in Mark's gospel to its author and to the primitive Christian community from which he got his material, while Schweitzer attributed it to Jesus Himself. Theologians, faced with this alternative, chose the only way out which would seem to preserve Jesus' integrity. They preferred to believe that the eschatology, which was never literally fulfilled, was caused by the evangelist or the primitive community reading its own eschatological hopes into the record, or into the traditions on which it was based. This led to a whole new field of investigation: to study the tradition in the process of formation and transmission before it reached the stage of being compiled into our present gospels.

One phase of the study was "Source-Criticism", which seeks to determine the nature and extent of the written sources used by the Synoptists. It had really begun long before Schweitzer, with the serious study of the Synoptic problem. By his day the "Two-Source" theory was already pretty well established:

"Dass die Zweiquellentheorie sich in allgemein durchgesetzt

1. See Quest, Eng.ed., p. 329.

hat, darf wohl als anerkannt gelten."[1]

This "Two-Source" theory was that Mark had written a narrative life of Jesus, while His teachings had been gathered into a separate source, usually known as Q, which had been used by Matthew and Luke as well. Schweitzer really bases his interpretation upon this theory, rather than the Marcan hypothesis, since he introduces speeches from Matthew into the Marcan account. He feels quite justified in this, for after dealing with Harnack's Sprüche und Reden Jesu, he concludes:

> "Sicher ist so viel, dass der Verlauf der öffentlichen Wirksamkeit des Herrn weder aus Markus, noch aus der Ueberlieferung der Spruchsammlung, sondern nur aus beiden zusammen zu übersehen und zu rekonstruieren ist."[2]

Various attempts have been made to improve upon this "Two-Source" theory. One, that by von Soden and others to find behind Mark an "Ur-Markus", Schweitzer had felt called upon to refute in the first edition of the Quest.[3] By the time of the second edition, however, he felt able to discount it:

> "Auf die Gewinnung einer 'Ur-Markus' wird gewöhnlich verzichtet."[4]

In this verdict he was mistaken. Bussmann, in his more recent researches, has really revived the Ur-Markus theory in that he postulates a basic narrative document G, used by all three Synoptists, supplemented by additional material B, used by Matthew and Mark but unknown to Luke, who supplemented G from sources of his own.[5]

1. Quest, Ger.ed., p. 605.
2. ibid., p. 607.
3. Quest, Eng.ed., p. 329.
4. uest, Ger.ed., p. 608.
5. See Bussmann, Synoptische Studien, Bd.I-III.

R. Otto's theory of a "Stammschrift" is very similar.[1] Streeter, on the other hand, tries to distinguish between Q, the common discourse source of Matthew and Luke, and separate sources M and L, containing the matter peculiar to each, and to establish a "Proto-Luke" behind Luke's gospel as we have it.[2] Even though these attempts do not all agree, the fact that they are so numerous is an indication that Schweitzer's theory of the origin of the gospel records is much too simple, and that to depend as he does on the order of events in Mark is decidedly perilous.

The more recent phase of the general study of the tradition, however, is the attempt to get behind written sources of every kind, and determine the origin and form of each separate section of the oral tradition from which the written sources, and later the gospels, were compiled. This is "Form-Geschichte", or "Form-Criticism". Its purpose is clearly stated by Dibelius, one of the founders of the movement, in these words of the author's preface to the English edition of his basic work on the subject:

> "The method of Formgeschichte has a two-fold objective. In the first place, by reconstruction and analysis, it seeks to explain the origin of the tradition about Jesus, and thus to penetrate into a period previous to that in which the Gospels and their written sources were recorded. But it has a further purpose. It seeks to make clear the intention and real interest of the earliest tradition. . . . .
>
> "The method of Formgeschichte seeks to help in answering the historical questions as to the nature and trustworthiness of our knowledge of Jesus, and also in solving a theological problem properly so-called. It shows in what way the earliest testimony about Jesus was interwoven with the earliest testimony about the salvation which had

1. R. Otto, The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, pp. 82ff. Otto's treatment, however, is not very conclusive. He has a tendency to include in St. what fits his theory, and omit what does not.

2. See Streeter, The Four Gospels.

appeared in Jesus Christ."[1]

The principal assumption behind this method is that the handing down of the tradition about Jesus was subject to certain laws, which produced different forms of source materials for the gospels. The method is to study each section of the gospels with a view to determining to which form it belongs, and then studying the examples of each form to determine what laws govern its transmission. These laws are then applied to the individual sections in the group to determine how they have been altered in the process of being handed down, in order to judge, if possible, the historical trustworthiness of the events recorded and the sayings attributed to Jesus.

Dibelius first tried to reconstruct the needs arising in the primitive church which contributed to the preservation of such materials as are found in the gospels, and found the occasion of many of them in the sermons preached to convert the Gentiles and in the instruction classes for catechumens. His reason for suggesting the Gentile church is that all the materials have come down to us in Greek, although Aramaic was the original language of Jesus and His disciples. He analysed the different forms, and studied each one in turn: Paradigmen, or short illustrative stories for use in sermons; Novellen, or miracle-stories; Legenden, that is, stories about sacred persons; the Passion story, which is the longest and most primitive connected narrative in the whole tradition; Chriae and Paraneses, or sayings of Jesus used to give instruction; and the element of Myth, which is very limited in the Synoptic Gospels, but dominant in the Gospel of John. His study leads him to attribute

1. From Tradition to Gospel, pp.v-vi.

relatively more historical value to the Paradigms and Sayings, less to the Tales and Legends, and least of all to the few Myths. He concludes:

> "General observations of this character are better able to show how conservative the tradition of Jesus really is than considerations of detail applied to passages of the New Testament."[1]
> and "The weightiest part of the tradition had been developed at a time while eyewitnesses still lived, and when the events were only about a generation old. It is not to be wondered at that this part of the tradition remains relatively unaltered."[2]

But this result is only relative. Henceforth there can be no real certainty of the wording of a text. Each text must be studied by itself, according to its form, and judged accordingly.

Dibelius did not undertake this task in From Tradition to Gospel. He did publish, later, a more or less popular treatment, The Message of Jesus. In this, surprisingly, the classifications are given slightly different names: Early Christian Preaching (examples of primitive sermons), The Old Stories (some of the Paradigms and the Passion Story), Parables (formerly included in the Sayings), Sayings (Sayings and groups of Sayings), The Great Miracle Tales (mostly Novellen), and Legends. Many typical passages are printed within each of these groups; in a fresh translation, in the first half of the book. The second half offers an Explanation, which gives, in a shortened form and less technical language, the application of Form Criticism to the chosen passages. The conclusions, however, remain about the same as in the longer, more technical, work.

The more intensive examination of individual texts was undertaken and carried out by Bultmann. His Geschichte der synoptischen

1. From Tradition to Gospel, p. 293. 2. ibid., p. 295.

Tradition and his Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien were attempts to work out a similar method, quite independent of Dibelius. His categories therefore have different names, and the distinctions between them are different. Yet his Apothegmata correspond in general to Dibelius' Paradigms, though he subdivides them into Streitgespräche, Schulgespräche, and biographischen Apothegmata; his Wundergeschichten match Dibelius' Novellen; and his Sayings, divided into five subheads; Logia, Prophetic words, Law-words and Rules, Sayings in the First Person, and Parables, correspond roughly with Dibelius' Paranesen; his Legenden include all the rest, including the Myths, for he does not try to reserve historical judgment on any of them. In fact, his criticism is so sceptical generally that Vincent Taylor writes of him:

> "It would not be unfair to describe the work as a study in the cult of the conceivable. But I believe that no small part of his 'scepticism' is the painful anxiety of the trained investigator in no way to fail in doing full justice to the formative activity of any community which appeals, and must appeal, to the words of a revered Teacher. The real charge against him is that he is kinder to the possibilities than to the probabilities of things."[1]

The above discussion only scratches the surface of the Form Critical movement. But it will suffice for this thesis, into which it is introduced only to show what bearing Formgeschichte has on Schweitzer's eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus. Among its many consequences for gospel research are two which if true seriously challenge Schweitzer's view.

The first is that it insists on the growth of the gospels as collections of individual sections of traditional material, thus

1. The Formation of the Gospel Tradition, p. 15.

destroying any possibility of reconstructing the life of Jesus from them as if we had in any sense a connected record of His life. This, it will be remembered, was one of the postulates which Schweitzer had insisted was necessary to his research:

> "If the tradition preserved by the Synoptists really includes all that happened during the time that Jesus was with His disciples, the attempt to discover the connection must succeed sooner or later. It becomes more and more clear that this presupposition is indispensable to the investigation. If it is merely a fortuitous series of episodes that the Evangelists have handed down to us, we may give up the attempt to arrive at a critical reconstruction of the life of Jesus as hopeless."[1]

Moreover, he had himself used the fact that the gospels are constructed from disconnected sections as an argument against the "liberal" view:

> "Thoroughgoing scepticism and thoroughgoing eschatology, between them, are compelling theology to read the Marcan text again with simplicity of mind. The simplicity consists in dispending with the connecting links which it has been accustomed to discover between the sections of the narrative (pericopes), in looking at each one separately, and recognizing that it is difficult to pass from one to the other.
>
> "The material with which it has hitherto been usual to solder the sections together into a life of Jesus will not stand the temperature test. Exposed to the cold air of critical scepticism it cracks; when the furnace of eschatology is heated to a certain point the solderings melt. In both cases the sections fall apart.
>
> "Formerly it was possible to book through-tickets at the supplementary-psychological-knowledge office which enabled those travelling in the interests of Life-of-Jesus construction to use express trains, thus avoiding the inconvenience of having to stop at every little station, change, and run the risk of missing their connection. This ticket office is now closed. There is a station at the end of each section of the narrative, and the connections are not guaranteed."[2]

Of course, when it came to his own reconstruction, Schweitzer claimed to have found a new principle of connection in the eschatology. But

1. Quest, p. 7. See above, p. 70.

2. Quest, pp.331-332.

if Form Criticism is right in its basic assumption that the gospels were formed from independent and originally isolated elements of tradition, of whatever character, then the through tickets sold at the eschatology ticket-office are just as spurious as the others, because there are no through trains on which they might be honoured. The best we can do is to reconstruct the life of Jesus as it was understood by a given Evangelist, reflecting perhaps the beliefs of a given time and place in the early church. Schweitzer stands condemned by his own prolegomenon:

> "If it is merely a fortuitous series of episodes that the Evangelists have handed down to us, we may give up the attempt to arrive at a critical reconstruction of the life of Jesus as hopeless."[1]

A second consequence of Form Criticism for Schweitzer's view is its undertanding of the trustworthiness of individual passages. Different critics may take different positions as to which passages should be considered genuine. Bultmann is the more sceptical, but even Dibelius points out that the historicity is all relative. Individual deeds and sayings may be genuine, but even in these we cannot depend on the wording in which we have them, since it was susceptible of being coloured by the use to which they were put in the churches, to which they owe their preservation. Yet the proudest claim of Schweitzer is that his interpretation does full justice to the texts. That claim is justified to the extent that he takes them more conscientiously at their face value than his contemporaries. But Form Criticism has shown the danger of taking texts at their face value, without careful investigation of the process

1. Quest, p. 7.

by which each one was transmitted. Thus Form Criticism casts doubt upon Schweitzer's eschatological view as effectively as he had cast douht upon the "liberal" view.

It is interesting to note here what Schweitzer had to say of D. F. Strauss, who was, in a way, a forerunner of the Form Critics, in that he discovered mythical elements in many of the gospel narratives, and, indeed, seems to have sought them, even where they did not exist. Schweitzer's comment is this:

> "For one thing, he overestimates the importance of the Old Testament motives in reference to the creative activity of the legend. He does not see that while in many cases he has shown clearly enough the source of the <u>form</u> of the narrative in question, this does not suffice to explain its <u>origin</u>. Doubtless, there is mythical material in the story of the feeding of the multitude. But the existence of the story is not explained by referring to the manna in the desert, or the miraculous feeding of a multitude by Elisha. The story in the Gospel has far too much individuality for that, and stands, moreover, in much too closely articulated an historical connection. It must have as its basis some historical fact. It is not a myth, though there is myth in it. Similarly with the account of the transfiguration. The substratum of historical fact in the life of Jesus is much more extensive than Strauss is prepared to admit."[1]

Except for the Old Testament references, these same sentences might well be the reaction of a conservative exegete to the researches of Bultmann. But they are not sufficient to refute Form Criticism. In the first place, Form Criticism has a well worked-out theory of the <u>origins</u> as well as of the <u>forms</u> of the gospel date in the tradition of the early church. And in the second place, to establish a substratum of historical fact, which the Form Critics concede, is not to establish the verbal accuracy of the record of that fact, or the relation of that fact to the other facts also embedded in the gospels.

1. <u>Quest</u>, p. 84. The italics are his.

On the other hand, in dealing with Wrede, Schweitzer makes a number of criticisms which might be extended to Form Criticism as well. The problem at issue here is how Jesus could have come to be considered Messiah by the primitive community if He had not Himself claimed to be.

> "The positive difficulty which confronts the sceptical theory is to explain how the Messianic beliefs of the first generation arose, if Jesus, throughout His life, was for all, even for the disciples, merely a 'teacher', and gave even His intimates no hint of the dignity which He claimed for Himself. It is difficult to eliminate the Messiahship from the 'life of Jesus', especially from the narrative of the passion; it is more difficult still, as Keim saw long ago, to bring it back again after its elimination from the 'Life' into the theology of the primitive Church."[1]

Wrede traced it back to the "resurrection experiences". "But", demands Schweitzer,

> "how did the appearance of the risen Jesus suddenly become for them a proof of His Messiahship and the basis of their eschatology?"[2]

He claims they must have been led to expect it by the historical Jesus.

> "Here Wrede himself, though without admitting it, postulates some Messianic hints on the part of Jesus, since he conceives the judgment of the disciples upon the resurrection to have been not analytical, but synthetic, inasmuch as they add something to it, and that, indeed, the main thing, which was not implied in the conception of the event as such."[3]

He then goes on to point out other inconsistencies in Wrede, and concludes:

> "He is bound to refer everything inexplicable to the principle of the concealment of the Messiahship."[4]

1. Quest, p. 343.
2. ibid., p. 343.
3. ibid., p. 344.
4. Quest., p. 347.

Schweitzer's disposal of Wrede is very skilful indeed. And in it he puts his finger also on the Form-critical attitude in germ. For Form Criticism does not show where the primitive community got its idea that Jesus was Messiah, or indeed, where many of its ideas came from if not from Him to whom they are attributed. The nearest answer to the present question is found in Dibelius' discussion of the motives behind the collation of the Passion Story: "

> "viz., to describe that meaning of the events which was founded on the Easter faith."[1]

But this is just what Schweitzer had criticised in Wrede. On the other hand, it should be pointed out that Dibelius nowhere denies the eschatology, as Wrede had done in postulating that Jesus was known to his disciples only as a "teacher". And here we observe a great difference between Form Criticism and the historical criticism to which Schweitzer belonged - Form Criticism is interested in tracing back the tradition, in a literary way, and its interest in historicity is only secondary. Enough for Form Criticism that the tradition spoke of Jesus in eschatological terms as the Messiah, and also collected His sayings as of value for teaching. In fact, at one point, it sounds as if Dibelius ascribed the idea of Jesus as teacher to Mark:

> "The introductory remarks depicting the circumstances (of the parabolic discourse in Mark 4), and the interpretation inserted, are an addition of Mark's. . . . . The important point for our problem is that he introduces this tradition (iv.2) with the remark 'He taught them much in parables and said to them in the course of His teaching'."[2]

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1. From Tradition to Gospel, p. 184

2. ibid., p. 236.

To be sure, the point that Dibelius is here trying to make is quite a different one, but he does ascribe the use of Jesus' sayings for exhortation (Paranesis) to the community, rather than to Jesus Himself.

We here discover one of the great weaknesses of Form Criticism: its result is almost entirely negative, for even by its established laws, it cannot show what underlies the tradition, but only how, once it had come into being, it grew into the gospels as they were written down. Dibelius is very careful to trace the "Sitz im Leben" in which each form originated, but he cannot show where the material came from that was thus formulated. Thus Form Criticism has multiplied the problems of exegesis, and reduced the degree of trustworthiness we can attribute to the individual passages, without any compensating positive result.

And yet, this robs us no more than does Schweitzer's "stranger and enigma" Jesus, who slips away from our age and returns to His own, and is therefore irrelevant to our present-day needs. Small wonder that "theology", thus impoverished, has turned so overwhelmingly from extreme reliance on history to the opposite extreme represented by the Barthians, with their Christ who is "wholly other", the transcendent Word of God. This is, indeed, just what Schweitzer himself has done with his Christ-mysticism, by which he is related, not to the eschatological, historical Jesus, but to the living, reigning Christ whom he serves in the jungle of Africa.

c. A new estimate of Schweitzer.

The suggestion has been made by some who consider Schweitzer

"the greatest man in the world", that he did not in fact believe in his eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus, but worked out his hypothesis in an attempt to show the futility of trying to write a "historical" life of Jesus. Schweitzer himself mentions three such satirical "Lives", one of Luther, one of Napoleon, and one of D. F. Strauss, all written to ridicule Strauss' first Life of Jesus, in which so much was rejected as mythical.[1] These apologists for Schweitzer's greatness point out that his own allegiance to Christ is not dependent on his "historical Jesus", but on the Christ whom he knows mystically, and obeys sacrificially. But there is no hint in Schweitzer's own writings of any such satirical purpose. To ascribe it to him one has to read between the lines of his books something which is not there. The later German edition of the Quest is just as dead in earnest as the earlier one which was translated into English. And in My Life and Thought, which appeared in 1933, the only apology he makes for the eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus, which he carefully summarizes, together with his motives for writing it, is the special chapter dealing with "The Historical Jesus and the Christianity of Today." In the opening paragraph of this chapter he writes:

> "The satisfaction which I could not help feeling at having solved so many historical riddles about the existence of Jesus, was accompanied by the painful consciousness that this new knowledge in the realm of history would mean unrest and difficulty for Christian piety."[2]

And he closes the chapter with these words:

> "I find it no light task to follow my vocation, to put pressure on the Christian faith to reconcile itself in all sincerity with historical truth. But I have devoted my-

1. My Life and Thought, p. 65.

1. Quest, p. 112.

> self to it with joy, because I am certain that truthfulness in all things belongs to the spirit of Jesus."[1]

If he knew of this modern attempt to canonize him, he would undoubtedly point out that it springs from the same false motives which have led theologians to insist on the inerrancy of Jesus, at the expense of that devotion to historical truth for which he has been struggling.

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1. My Life and Thought, p. 75.

Chapter Three

ESCHATOLOGY AND ETHICS

1. Schweitzer's conception of Jesus' eschatology.

Albert Schweitzer did not, of course, invent the eschatology of Jesus. It lay before him in the gospels. His contribution lay in calling attention to its presence there, and the importance attached to it especially by Mark and Matthew, and in trying to explain the life of Jesus by it. In the early days of Christianity it had formed an important part of the Christian faith. That Jesus should have been believed to have shared it was only natural, since He was expected to be the centre of its fulfilment. Indeed, we may well question whether, without the eschatological hope, Christians could have endured the persecutions and martyrdoms which were their lot in the first three centuries A.D., and so have preserved their religion and handed it down to us. But as years and centuries and even millennia have passed without any eschatological realisation of the Kingdom, faith in it has weakened, until this feature of the Christian message, once at its centre, has become for many, especially the scientific-minded, one of the chief obstacles to its acceptance.

Yet accept it we must, in some form or other. As Schweitzer points out:

> "If Jesus did not take Himself to be the Messiah, this means the death-blow to the Christian faith. The judgment of the early Church is not binding upon us. The Christian religion is founded upon the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, whereby He himself in a signal manner distinguished His own person from the rank of other preachers of religious morality. If now He did not take Himself to be the

> Messiah, then the whole of Christianity rests - to use honestly a much perverted and abused word - upon a 'value judgment' formed by the adherents of Jesus of Nazareth after His death!"[1]

Thus the problem of Jesus' eschatology cannot be whether He had one, but what He believed, and what significance He attached to His beliefs. In his interpretation of it, Schweitzer has adopted the most literal point of view possible. This has had the inevitable effect of emphasizing the incompatibility of early Christian hopes with those of the present day. The question immediately arises whether a reinterpretation with such far-reaching consequences is justified. Schweitzer is perfectly aware of these consequences:

> "We are experiencing what Paul experienced. In the very moment when we were coming nearer to the historical Jesus than men had ever come before, and were already stretching out our hands to draw Him into our time, we have been obliged to give up the attempt and acknowledge our failure in that paradoxical saying: 'If we have known Christ after the flesh yet henceforth know we Him no more.' And further we must be prepared to find that the historical knowledge of the personality and life of Jesus will not be a help, but perhaps even an offence to religion."[2]

Still he felt the effort justified because

> "Truth is under all circumstances more valuable than non-truth, and this must apply to truth in the realm of history as to other kinds of truth. Even if it comes in a guise which piety finds strange and at first makes difficulties for her, the final result can never mean injury; it can only mean greater depth. Religion has, therefore, no reason for trying to avoid coming to terms with historical truth."[3]

First, then, we must examine the content of Jesus' eschatological beliefs. Schweitzer goes on the assumption that Jesus shared

1. Sketch, pp. 5-6.

2. Quest, 1st.ed., p. 399.

3. My Life and Thought, p. 65.

many of the beliefs which were current in His day. What these were should be evident from the eschatological writings of that time, of which a number have come down to us. But when we study these, we find no unanimity of thought. Leckie, in his Kerr Lectures, seems overwhelmed by

> "the immense variety and confusion of its forms"[1];

and decides at the outset that

> "We may reasonably doubt whether it will ever be possible to bring order out of all this perplexity, or to reduce to system the amazing variety of the eschatological forms."[2]

R. H. Charles, in his more exhaustive, though earlier, treatise on Eschatology, Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian, also notes this variety, but since his purpose is historical rather than interpretative, he is less confused by it. He points out that

> "at all periods of the history of Israel there existed side by side in its religion incongruous and inconsistent elements",[3]

and adds:

> "The recognition of these facts is of primary importance when we deal with New Testament eschatology. In the first place, we shall not be surprised if the eschatology of the latter should, to some extent, present similar incongruous phenomena as the Old Testament and subsequent Jewish literature. And, in the next, we shall be prepared to deal honestly with any such inconsistencies. So far,

1. The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 6. This book does, however, include as appendices a conspectus of the teachings of twelve Jewish apocalyptic works (pp.326-331), and a short comparative statement of Jewish and New Testament eschatology (pp.332-345).

2. ibid., p. 7.

3. A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life - the Jowett Lectures for 1898-1899, pp.309-310. This book bears on its back the title, Eschatology, Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian, and will be referred to hereinafter as Eschatology.

therefore, from attempting, as in the past, to explain them away or to bring them into harmony with doctrines that in reality make their acceptance impossible, we shall frankly acknowledge their existence, and assign to them their full historical value."[1]

Schweitzer is also aware of this variety of eschatological expectation at the time of Jesus. He lists it as part of the problem in the first chapter of the Quest:

"Again, whereas in general a personality is to some extent defined by the world of thought which it shares with its contemporaries, in the case of Jesus this source of information is as unsatisfactory as the documents.

"What was the nature of the contemporary Jewish world of thought? To that question no clear answer can be given. We do not know whether the expectation of the Messiah was generally current or whether it was the faith of a mere sect. With the Mosaic religion as such it had nothing to do. There was no organic connection between the religion of legal observance and the future hope. Further, if the eschatological hope was generally current, was it the prophetic or the apocalyptic form of that hope? We know the Messianic expectations of the prophets; we know the apocalyptic picture as drawn by Daniel, and, following him, by Enoch and the Psalms of Solomon before the coming of Jesus, and by the Apocalypses of Ezra and Baruch about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. But we do not know which was the popular form; nor, supposing that both were combined into one picture, what this picture really looked like. We know only the form of eschatology which meets us in the Gospels and in the Pauline epistles; that is to say, the form which it took in the Christian community in consequence of the coming of Jesus. And to combine these three - the prophetic, the late-Jewish apocalyptic, and the Christian - has not proved possible."[2]

Nor is it clear just what Jesus believed:

"Even supposing we could obtain more exact information regarding the popular Messianic expectations at the time of Jesus, we should still not know what form they assumed in the self-consciousness of One who knew Himself to be the Messiah but held that the time was not yet come for Him to reveal Himself as such. We only know their aspect from without, as a waiting for the Messiah and the Messianic Age; we have no clue to their aspect from within as factors in the

1. Eschatology, p. 310.

2. Quest, p. 8.

> messianic self-consciousness. We possess no psychology of the Messiah. The Evangelists have nothing to tell us about it, because Jesus told them nothing about it; the sources for the contemporary spiritual life inform us only concerning the eschatological expectation. For the form of the messianic self-consciousness of Jesus we have to fall back upon conjecture."[1]

We have already pointed out how perilous this dependence on conjecture is historically. It must be admitted, however, that Schweitzer began inductively. He was first confronted with the eschatology of Jesus during student days as he studied Matthew's account of the commission to the twelve (it is only summarized in Mark):

> "In Matthew x the mission of the Twelve is marrated. In the discourse with which He sends them out Jesus tells them that they will almost immediately have to undergo severe persecution. But they suffer nothing of the kind.
>
> "He tells them also that the appearance of the Son of Man will take place before they have gone through the cities of Israel, which can only mean that the celestial, Messianic Kingdom will be revealed while they are thus engaged. He has, therefore, no expectation of seeing them return.
>
> "How comes it that Jesus leads His disciples to expect events about which the remaining portion of the narrative is silent?
>
> "I was dissatisfied with Holtzmann's explanation that we are dealing not with an historical discourse of Jesus, but with one made up at a later period, after His death, out of various 'Sayings of Jesus'. A later generation would never have gone so far as to put into His mouth words which were belied by the subsequent course of events.
>
> "The bare text compelled me to assume that Jesus really announced persecutions for the disciples, and, as a sequel to them, the immediate appearance of the celestial Son of Man, and that His announcement was shown by subsequent events to be wrong. But how came He to entertain such an expectation, and what must His feelings have been when events turned out otherwise than He had assumed they would?"[2]

These last questions did not receive an immediate answer. But it is significant for an understanding of Schweitzer that they should occupy his attention rather than the previous question of which he

1. Quest, pp. 8-9.

2. My Life and Thought, p. 18.

disposed so easily - that of the authenticity of these sayings of Jesus.* Yet on the whole it must be condeded that he has been faithful to the obvious meaning of the passage, and come to grips with it, instead of trying to explain it away because it is inconvenient (although he is guilty of using this tactic later on).

The whole matter was further complicated by Jesus' reply to the

We have already pointed out above (pp.95-96), the dangers of such a literal and uncritical use of speeches attributed to Jesus and the settings in which they are placed by the evangelists, in the light of Form Criticism. In the case of this particular passage (Matthew 10), Holtzmann's judgment, to which Schweitzer here objected, was vindicated by the later research. Its composite nature is demonstrated by Source Criticism as follows: vv.9-11 & 14 are from Mark (6.8-11); vv.12-13,15-16, and 26-42 are from Q, being parallel to scattered passages in Luke (10.6-7,12,3; 12.2-9,51-53; 14.26-27; 17,33); while vv.5-8 and 17-25 are peculiar to Matthew. Vs.17 is reminiscent of Mt.24.9,13 = Mk.13.9-13 = Lk.21.12-17,19. The whole chapter is thus shown to be, after all, a collection of sayings of Jesus, originally spoken on various occasions, but joined together according to subject as an aid to memory, and later written down together.

On the other hand, Form Criticism would not deny that an authentic saying of Jesus underlay such a specific pronouncement as vs.23. It would agree with Schweitzer that "A later generation would never have gone so far as to put into His mouth words which were belied by the subsequent course of events." So this word, whether spoken at the mission to the twelve or on some other occasion, presents a problem, and is not to be lightly dismissed.

This is decidedly ingenious, the sort of original treatment that makes Schweitzer such fascinating reading. It deals, however,

1. My Life and Thought, pp.18-19.

* See appended note, p.107a.

not with Jesus' eschatology, but with Schweitzer's corollary theory of the Messianic secret, by which he seeks to explain how Jesus came to be thought of as a teacher or rabbi, and why the eschatological passages in the gospels are sometimes obscure. We shall deal with this whole matter later.*

Meanwhile, Schweitzer's new understanding of Jesus' eschatology was confirmed by what Jesus had to say of John the Baptist after his messengers had departed:

> "I was also driven into new paths of interpretation by Jesus saying to the disciples after the departure of the Baptist's messengers, that of all born of women John was the greatest, but that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he (Matt.11.11).
>
> "The usual explanation, that Jesus expressed in these words a criticism of the Baptist and placed him at a lower level than the believers in His teaching who were assembled round Him as adherents of the Kingdom of God, seemed to me both unsatisfying and crude, for these believers were also born of women. By giving up this explanation I was driven to the assumption that in contrasting the Baptist with members of the Kingdom of God Jesus was taking into account the difference between the natural world and the supernatural, Messianic world. As a man in the condition into which all men enter at birth the Baptist is the greatest of all who have ever lived. But members of the Kingdom of Heaven are no longer natural men; through the dawn of the Messianic Kingdom they have experienced a change which has raised them to a supernatural condition akin to that of the angels. Because they are now supernatural beings the least among them is greater than the greatest man who has ever appeared in the natural world of the age which is now passing away. John the Baptist does, indeed, belong to this Kingdom either as a great or humble member of it. But a unique greatness, surpassing that of all other human beings, is his only in his natural mode of existence."[1]

Here we have an expression of the "thoroughgoing" apocalyptic expectation which Schweitzer attributes to Jesus. The Messianic Kingdom is conceived as wholly future, and wholly supernatural.

1. My Life and Thought, p. 19.

* See pp. 138 ff.

> "Jesus, however, reached back after the fundamental conception of the prophetic period, and it is only the form in which He conceives of the emergence of the final event which bears the stamp of later Judaism. He no longer conceives of it as an intervention of God in the history of the nations, as did the Prophets; but rather as a final cosmical catastrophe. His eschatology is the apocalyptic of the book of Daniel, since the Kingdom is to be brought about by the Son of Man when He appears upon the clouds of heaven (Mk.8.38, 9.1)."[1]

That such eschatological conceptions were current in Jesus' day cannot be denied. The apocalyptic writings, from Dahiel on, refer the Messianic Kingdom increasingly to the future, and to the supernatural intervention of God. This fact is no doubt due to the despair of those who were persecuted, especially those who were martyred for their loyalty to God. No human help seemed able to deliver them in this life, so their faith in God prompted them to trust Him to do so in a future Kingdom.[2]

On the other hand, it should be pointed out that in Jesus' day there were also frequent cases of would-be human Messiahs who led bands of zealots in insurrection against Rome. Bultmann gives a substantial list of such Messianic movements,[3] and points out that John the Baptist, probably, and Jesus, certainly, were executed by the authorities as dangerous agitators of this kind.[4] There can be no doubt, however, that such charges against Jesus were trumped up by His enemies, and the gospels nowhere record any action on His part (except possibly the Triumphal Entry - the cleansing of the temple was a religious and not a political act) to suggest that

1. Sketch, pp.114-115.
2. See Charles, Eschatology, p. 178.
3. Jesus and the Word, pp. 20-22.
4. ibid., pp.25-26.

He expected to establish His Kingdom in that way.

If the Kingdom is wholly future, and wholly supernatural, then it follows that the Messiah, too, is wholly future and wholly supernatural. Jesus considers Himself, according to Schweitzer, as at present only a man among men, although in the future Kingdom He expects to be the Messiah. And since blessing in the future depends upon conduct in this life, He must live and act on earth as befits one who is to be the Messiah in the future Kingdom.

> "In this sense, then, Jesus' Messianic consciousness is futuristic. There was nothing strange in this either for Him or for His disciples. On the contrary, it corresponded exactly to the Jewish conception of the hidden life and labour of the Messiah (Cf. Weber: System der altsynagogalen Theologie, 1880, pp. 324-446). The course of Jesus' earthly life preceded His Messiahship in glory. The Messiah in His earthly estate must live and labour unrecognized, He must teach, and through deed and suffering He must be made perfect in righteousness. Not till then shall the Messianic age dawn with the Last Judgment and the establishment of the Kingdom."[1]

Of course, the Messiah was originally expected, by the prophets, to be an earthly king of Davidic descent. But as the Kingdom became projected into the future, so did the Messiah. Indeed, Charles notes a disappearance of the Messianic hope in the 2nd century B.C. (the time of the Maccabees), and a revival of it in the 1st (when the Hasmoneans turned out to be as oppressive tyrants as the Seleucids they had driven out).[2] In the Psalms of Solomon 17 & 18, the Old Testament hope for a militant Davidic Messiah reappears. But in the Enoch literature, especially the Similitudes (Eth.En. 37-70), he is replaced by the new figure of the Son of Man, an entirely supernatural being, reminiscent of Daniel 7.13, who is both Judge of the

1. Sketch, p. 188.

2. Eschatology, p. 240.

world and Champion and Ruler of the Righteous.[1]

It will be remembered, of course, that Jesus' favourite title for Himself, according to the Synoptic gospels, is Son of Man. He rarely, if ever, called Himself by any other, and yet no one else ever addressed Him by that title. Schweitzer explains this phenomenon as follows:

> "The Messianic title 'Son of Man' is futuristic in character. It refers to the moment in which the Messiah shall come upon the clouds of heaven for judgment. From the beginning this was the sense in which Jesus had used the expression, whether in speaking to the people or to the disciples. In sending out His Apostles He warned them of the impending approach of the day of the Son of Man (Mt.10.23). He spoke to the people of the coming of the Son of Man as an exhortation to be faithful to Him, Jesus (Mk.8.38).
>
> "Withal, He and the Son of Man remain for the people and for the disciples two entirely distinct personalities. The one is a terrestrial, the other a celestial figure; the one belongs to the age that now is, the other to the Messianic period. Between the two there exists solidarity, inasmuch as the Son of Man will intervene in behalf of such as have ranged themselves on the side of Jesus, the herald of His coming."[2]

and he further explains:

> "'Son of Man' is accordingly the adequate expression of His Messiahship, so long as He, in this earthly aeon as Jesus of Nazareth, has occasion to refer to His future dignity. Hence when He speaks to the disciples about Himself as the Son of Man He assumes this duality of consciousness. 'The Son of Man must suffer and will then rise from the dead'; that is to say, 'As the one who is to be the Son of Man at the resurrection of the dead I must suffer!. To the same effect we must understand the word about serving: As the one who in the character of the Son of Man is destined to the highest rule I must now humble myself to the lowliest service (Mk.10.45). Therefore He says when they come to arrest Him: The hour is come in which He who is to be the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinners. (Mk.14.21,41).
>
> "The problem about the Son of Man is herewith elucidated. It was not an expression which Jesus commonly used to describe Himself, but a solemn title which He adopted

1. Charles, Eschatology, p. 214.

2. Sketch, pp. 191-192.

> when in the great moments of His life He spoke about Himself to the initiated as the future Messiah, while before the others He spoke of the Son of Man as a personality distinct from Himself. In all cases, however, the context shows that He is speaking of one who is yet to come, for in all these passages mention is made either of the Resurrection or of the appearing upon the clouds of heaven."[1]

This theory receives remarkable corroboration from the work of Rudolph Otto. Otto's thesis is that Jesus actually knew the Enoch literature, and that His own consciousness of mission led Him to make use of Enoch's thought-forms.[2] He makes a special point of the fact that after being translated to heaven, Enoch was revealed as the Son of Man,[3] and that

"Jesus knew Himself to be the filius hominis praedestinatus".[4] Various other parallels are drawn in the chapters that follow - so many of them in fact that he comes perilously near to discrediting his own theory. For while he carefully states,

> "We repeat: His consciousness of mission did not issue from such a previously formed idea, but from the constitution and essence of His person"[5],

he then proceeds to treat the Son of Man utterances, and indeed the whole concept, as if they were directly derived from Enoch. Of particular interest is his theory of the Messianic secret, which, though derived from Enoch, closely resembles Schweitzer's.[6] But this is a secondary point, to which we shall return later.

1. Sketch, pp.192-193.
2. The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, p. 213.
3. ibid., p. 208.
4. ibid., p. 219.
5. ibid., p. 213.
6. ibid., ch. VI.

Meanwhile, it must not be overlooked that the title "Son of Man", in the Aramaic בר אנש, has been declared by such eminent scholars as Lietzmann, Wellhausen and N. Schmidt to be equivalent simply to "man", or "human being". Even in Daniel 7, it may have only this meaning - the "Son of Man" who comes on the clouds of heaven being contrasted with the various beasts which preceded Him. Schweitzer is aware of this. In the Quest, he states their case,[1] and then appeals to an equally eminent scholar, Dalman, to refute it.[2] A much simpler and more sensible argument is used by E. F. Scott, who points out: first, that although the church abandoned use of the title Son of Man, it was retained in the traditional accounts of what Jesus said;[3] second, although it may sometimes be interpreted as meaning simply "man" (as in Mk. 2.10 & 28, and possibly Mt.12.32, 8.20, & 11.19), and in some cases the evangelists seem to have used it in place of a simple "I":

> "There still remain instances which cannot be removed without destroying the whole Gospel tradition; but it is fully evident that "Son of man" was by no means a name which was habitually used by Jesus. He had resort to it only on rare occasions, and never without a definite purpose."[4]

This purpose he too finds reflected in the apocalyptic concept of Daniel and Enoch[5], and Jesus used it to assert His future Messiahship in spite of the sufferings that were to be His lot in this life.[6]

1. Quest, pp. 276f.

2. Quest, pp. 278f. In the English edition. Burkitt has inserted a footnote (p.279) calling attention to the fact that Schweitzer has overstated Dalman's case.

3. The Kingdom and the Messiah, pp. 187 ff.

4. ibid., pp. 195-196.

5. ibid., p. 198.

6. ibid., pp. 204-205.

He concludes, therefore, that

> "Jesus designated Himself the "Son of Man" in order to point men to His future destiny. His earthly life was in seeming contradiction to His great claim; yet they were to accept Him as the Messiah, in view of the part which He would enact hereafter. His work was as yet preparatory, but it was leading up to His ultimate manifestation as the Son of Man. This account of the name is borne out by the passages in which it is most clearly demonstrable that Jesus employed it. Invariably they have reference to the final apocalyptic events -- to the inauguration of the Kingdom, the Judgment, the perfecting of the holy community."[1]

But although, according to Schweitzer, Jesus conceived of the Kingdom as future, in the sense of being transcendentally different from the present, He did not believe it was far off in time - in fact, He was sure it would break in at any moment. As we have seen, Schweitzer takes the words; "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come" (Matt.10.23), to mean that Jesus expected it before the twelve returned from their mission. This sense of immediacy is a familiar feature of apocalyptic thought. Its purpose, of course, is to encourage the saints to believe that their sufferings are nearly over. Charles traces the recasting of the hope from Jeremiah down to 4 Ezra, showing how each writer expected deliverance in his own time.[2] The same thing is observable in the Christian book of Revelation, and in the "Synoptic apocalypse" in Mark 13 and parallels.[3] So this sense of immediacy was in the

1. The Kingdom and the Messiah, p. 208. The fact that Scott, in the course of his argument, mentions his theory that Jesus' Messianic consciousness developed during His ministry (p. 201), does not affect his conclusion that Jesus interpreted His Messiahship in eschatological terms. W. Manson (Jesus the Messiah, p. 34) takes definite issue with "the school of Schweitzer" on this point.

2. Eschatology, pp. 171-173.

3. It is still observable today in popular "prophetic" groups, which are constantly discovering in Scripture references of all kinds, and even in such unscriptural sources as the great pyramid of Egypt, in-

air in Jesus' day. John the Baptist had appeared with his call to repentance and threat of judgment. And Jesus' own first recorded public preaching was, according to Mark (1.15): "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the gospel." This is the same message that the twelve were to proclaim: "As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mt.10.7). Schweitzer says of this:

> "The commission, however, is anything but a summary of the 'teaching of Jesus'. It does not in the least contemplate instruction of a thoroughgoing kind, rather what is in question is a flying proclamation throughout Israel. The one errand of the Apostles as teachers is to cry out everywhere the warning of the nearness of the Kingdom of God - to the intent that all may be warned and given opportunity to repent."[1]

One indication of the nearness of the Kingdom is the signs and miracles which Jesus performed. This comes out in His answer to the scribes who tried to discredit Him by suggesting that He cast out demons by Beelzebub. Said He: "No one can enter the house of a strong man and spoil his goods, unless he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house" (Mk.3.27). On this Schweitzer comments:

> "For Jesus the signs signified the nearness of the King-

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dications of the end of the world, and the coming of the Kingdom of God. One group of American Adventists, for example, interprets the God and Magog passage in Ezekiel 38 as referring to Russia, and the present troubles in Palestine as preparation for a great battle on the literal plain of Armageddon. Within a month after the first announcement of the atomic bomb, a newspaper quoted a prediction that it was the instrument whereby God would fulfill the destruction foretold in II Peter 3.10: "But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a loud noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

1. Sketch, p. 88.

> dom in a sense still higher than the purely temporal, chronological nearness. . . . . The meaning of this parable is, in fact, not exhausted by the thought that evil spirits do not undermine their own dominion by rising up against one another. . . . . The casting out of demons, therefore, signified for Jesus the binding of the power of ungodliness and rendering it harmless",[1]

in preparation for the Kingdom.

Schweitzer finds a similar meaning in the parables of the sower, the self-growing seed, the mustard seed in Mark 4, all of which are intended to reveal "the mystery of the Kingdom of God" (Mark.4.11). The point of all these parables, according to him, is the great result that comes from so small a beginning - that and nothing more.

> "What these parables emphasize is, therefore, so to speak, the in itself negative, inadequate, character of the initial fact, upon which, as by a miracle, there follows in the appointed time, through the power of God, some great thing. They lay stress not upon the natural but upon the miraculous character of such occurrences."[2]

Again in this Schweitzer is seconded by Otto. He, too, sees Jesus' exorcisms as God's victory over Satan:

> "The stronger one (i.e. God Himself), who had stripped him of his armour. now proceeds to take from him his spoil through the working of the exorcist Jesus, who was sent by God and is working with his (God's) power."[3]

And the parables of Mark 4 bring the same message (in fact, Otto combines the parables of the sower and the seed growing of itself on literary grounds):

> "Two processes are compared: the one ordinary, well known, its familiar features repeated every year; the other a spiritual and invisible process. The former was meant to be an analogy to make the latter known, understood, and graphic, its peculiar quality shining before the eye of the hearer."[4]

1. Sketch, p. 143.

2. Quest, p. 354.

3. The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, p. 102

4. ibid, p. 117.

> "The Kingdom of God grows in the same way, quietly, secretly, unseen by dim eyes. It develops and grows by divine not human power; works and grows in a way that he does not know, mysteriously, by its own power, automatōs. It ripens in 'fruits of righteousness', in some cases thirty-fold, in others sixty-fold, in others a hundredfold - and all this as God's seed, not as man's deed."[1]

Otto parts company with Schweitzer in one important respect, however. His predilection for the Lucan account of the Beelzebub scene leads him to believe that Jesus considerdd the Kingdom as in some sense already present. For according to Luke (11.20), Jesus adds: "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has really come (ephthasen) upon you."[2] The Greek tense is aorist, indicating a single past event. Otto also interprets the passage about forcing the Kingdom (Mt.11.12) by taking "biazetai" as middle instead of passive, to mean "From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of God exercises its force."[3] This point of view affects his interpretation of the seed parables, especially the one about the seed growing of itself.[4] And he finds his theory still further supported by the celebrated saying recorded by Luke (17.21) about the Kingdom "in your midst"[5], as contrasted with the statement in Mark 9.1 about its future coming "with power".[6]

On the basis of these same verses, W. Manson makes this even stronger:

> "The future and higher sphere of glory already in a real sense penetrates and intersects this sphere of humiliation through the power of the Spirit."[7]
> "This is not all an enthusiastic prolepsis of the things to come. It means that the world is not left simply to itself,but stands,

1. The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, pp 118.
2. ibid., p. 102.
3. ibid., p. 108,
4. ibid., p. 118.
5. ibid., p. 131.
6. ibid., p. 147.
7. Jesus the Messiah, p. 208.

> despite all demonism, under the power and, by grace, within the range of the salvation of God and this would seem the first of the certitudes for which Jesus the Messiah stands."[1]

In his earlier discussion of these texts, he found confirmation that

> "Jesus in his characteristic words about the Kingdom of God reasons from the present events and experiences to the coming of that Kingdom, not vice versa."[2]

This, it will be observed, is the exact opposite of Schweitzer's emphasis on the "dogmatic" element in Jesus' concept of history:

> "Eschatology is simply 'dogmatic history' - history as moulded by theological beliefs - which breaks in upon the natural course of history and abrogates it. Is it not even a priori the only conceivable view that the conduct of one who looked forward to His Messianic 'Parousia' in the near future should be determined, not by the natural course of events, but by that expectation?"[3]

This is of course a rhetorical question, to which Schweitzer can conceive of only one answer - Yes. Manson's answer would be a virtual No.

C. H. Dodd finds the idea of the present Kingdom even in the parable of the Sower, and the other "parables of growth". He writes:

> "The 'eschatological' school, rightly, as I think, lays the stress where it falls in the parable as told, upon the abundant crop; but when they proceed to apply it to the sudden breaking-in of the Kingdom of God which they suppose Jesus to have expected in the near future, they do not seem to me to be keeping closely to the data."[4]

He even accuses the school of "konsequente Eschatologie" of compromise!

> "In the presence of one set of sayings which appeared to contemplate the coming of the Kingdom of God as future, and another set which appeared to contemplate it as already present, they offered an interpretation which represented it as coming very, very soon. But this is no solution."[5]

One reason why Schweitzer can have no conception of such a present effect of the Kingdom is that the Lucan passages do not enter his dis-

1. Jesus the Messiah, p. 209. 2. ibid., p. 78.

3. Quest, p. 349.

4. The Parables of the Kingdom, p. 182. 5. ibid., p. 49.

cussion.[1] The Matthew passage on which he depends is notorious for the difficultv it has given exegetes. He devotes three paragraphs of the quest to discussing various solutions, including the "usual" one, that it supports

> "the 'presence' of the Kingdom. This is the line taken by Wendt, Wernle, and Arnold Meyer. According to the last named it means: 'From the days of John the Baptist it has been possible to get possession of the Kingdom of God; yea, the righteous are every day earning it for their own'. But no explanation has heretofore succeeded in making it any degree intelligible how Jesus could date the presence of the Kingdom from the Baptist, whom in the same breath He places outside the Kingdom, or why, in order to express so simple an idea, He uses such entirely unnatural and inappropriate expressions as 'rape' and 'wrest to themselves'."[2]

We shall have occasion later to see what Schweitzer makes of this dubious passage.*

Besides the general idea that the Kingdom and the Messiah are both supernatural and future, though shortly to appear, Schweitzer finds in Jesus' eschatology certain more specific doctrines. Some of these have to do with the times of the end, just before the coming of the Kingdom.

First there is the matter of the Messianic woes or afflictions or tribulation. It will be remembered that when Jesus sent out the twelve in Matthew 10, besides predicting the coming of the Son of Man, He also predicted persecutions.

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1. In the German edition of the Quest,(p. 396), Schweitzer has added this footnote:

"Von Lukas wird in dieser Darstellung abgesehen, weil er in den Hauptsachen mit den beiden ersten Evangelisten übereinstimmt. Was er über sie hinaus berichtet, ist nicht besonders vertrauenerweckend, da es zum Teil auf unmöglichen Voraussetzungen - die Reise von Galiläa nach Jerusalem geht durch Samaria! - beruht, zum Teil durch gewisse heidenfreundliche und soziale Anschauungen tendenziös bestimmt ist. - Die literarischen Probleme dieses Evangeliums sind noch nicht gelöst. Auf die Frage, woher das lukanische Sondergut stamme, ist noch keine befriedigende Antwort gegeben worden. Jedoch lässt sich schon soviel erkennen, dass es sich um rein literarische und nicht um geschichtliche Probleme handelt."

2. Quest, p. 265.

* Su p. 134.

> "To put it more accurately, the prediction of the appearing of the Son of Man in Matt.10.23 runs up into a prediction of sufferings, which, working up to a climax, forms the remainder of the discourse at the sending forth of the disciples."[1]

This is another familiar feature of the apocalypses. Its original purport was that the persecutions of the saints were the last futile attack of evil against righteousness, and would soon be overcome by the appearance of the Son of Man.

> "The view that the world's history will terminate in the culmination of evil, and that Israel will be delivered by supernatural help in the moment of its greatest need, derives originally from Ezekiel, and after reproduction in various forms in his spiritual successors attains to classical expression in Daniel, and henceforth becomes a permanent factor in Jewish apocalyptic."[2]

In proof that this was part of Jesus' eschatological expectation, Schweitzer points out:

> "The foretelling of the sufferings that belong to the eschatological distress is part and parcel of the preaching of the approach of the Kingdom of God. . . It is for that reason that the thought of suffering appears at the end of the Beatitudes and in the closing petition of the Lord's Prayer. For the πειρασμός which is there in view is not an individual psychological temptation, but the general eschatological time of tribulation, from which God is besought to exempt those who pray so earnestly for the coming of the Kingdom, and not to expose them to that tribulation by way of putting them to the test."[3]

Jesus Himself expected to share in these woes, says Schweitzer:

> "But what was to be the fate of the future Son of Man during the Messianic woes of the last times? It appears as if it was appointed for Him to share the persecution and the suffering. He says that those who shall be saved must take up their cross and follow Him (Matt.10.38), that His followers must be willing to lose their lives for His sake, and that only those who in this time of terror confess their allegiance to Him, shall be confessed by Him before His

1. Quest, p. 359.

2. Charles, Eschatology, pp.121-122.

3. Quest, p. 362.

> heavenly Father (Matt.10.32). Similarly, in the last of the Beatitudes, He had pronounced those blessed who were despised and persecuted for His sake (Matt.5.11-12). As the future bearer of the supreme rule He must go through the deepest humiliation. There is danger that His followers may doubt Him. Therefore, the last words of His message to the Baptist, just at the time when He had sent forth the twelve, is 'Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me!(Matt.11.6)."[1]

Along with the predictions of persecution, there was also a prediction of the outpouring of the Spirit.

> "And as a matter of fact Jesus predicts to the disciples in the same discourse that to their own surprise,a supernatural wisdom will suddenly speak from their lips, so that it will not be they but the Spirit of God who will answer the great ones of the earth. As the Spirit is for Jesus and early Christian theology something concrete which is to descend upon the elect among mankind only in consequence of a definite event - the outpouring of the Spirit which, according to the prophecy of Joel, whould precede the day of judgment - Jesus must have antidipated that this would occur during the absence of the disciples, in the midst of the time of strife and confusion."[2]

This refers, of course, to Joel 2.28-31:

> "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

Since Peter used this prophecy in his sermon at Pentecost, we may concede that it was probably known to Jesus in that sense as well.

A third pre-Messianic manifestation also seems to be prophetic rather than apocalyptic in origin: the reappearance of Elijah, foretold by Malachi 4.5-6:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming

1. Quest, pp.369-370.

2. ibid., p. 360.

> of the great and terrible day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts. . . "

Of this passage Schweitzer writes:

> "Die Erwartung des Elias, von der Henoch, der Psalter Salomos, die Schmone-Esre und die Apokalypsen Baruch und Esra schweigen, beschäftigt den Nazarener auf das lebhafteste."[1]

and adds this footnote:

> "Diese Vorstellung wird Maleachi 3.23-24 (sic) zum erstenmal entwickelt und von Jesus Sirach (48.10-11) akzeptiert. Dass die apokalyptischen Schriften sie nicht erwähnen, ist auffällig. In der Mischna taucht sie wieder auf und gibt zu den mannigfachsten Kommentaren über Aufgabe und Machtbefugnis des wiederstandenen Propheten Anlass. (Siehe Klausner, S. 58-63). Man hat den Eindruck, dass sie ihren Platz in der späteren Eschatologie dem schriftgelehrten Studium verdankt. Ob sie es zur Zeit Jesu schon zu einer allgemeinen Bedeutung gebracht hatte, lässt sich nicht entscheiden. Die Bemerkung der Jünger beim Abstieg vom Verklärungsberge macht es wahrscheinlich (Mk.9.11)."[2]

The reference in Matt.11.14 would also seem to indicate that Jesus knew and accepted this prophecy. But to admit this is not to sanction the strange and exaggerated use made of it by Schweitzer in developing his Mystery of the Messiahship (see below).*

Also related to the last days is the idea of the resurrection. Schweitzer begins his discussion of it in this way:

> "What is the significance of the resurrection-prophecies? It seems to us hard to admit that Jesus could have foretold so precisely an event of this sort. It seems much more plausible to suppose that general utterances of His about a glory that awaited Him were editorially transformed ex eventu into predictions of the Resurrection."[3]

Having stated this difficulty, he then proceeds to dispose of it by pointing out the eschatological meaning of the Resurrection:

1. Quest, Ger. ed., p. 311.

2. ibid., p. 311, footnote.1.

3. Sketch, p. 201.

* See pp. 139ff.

> "Such criticism is in place so long as one holds the view that the prophecy of the Resurrection referred to an isolated event in the personal history of Jesus. So it appears, however, only to our modern consciousness, because we think unescha-tologically even in the matter of the Resurrection. For Jesus and His disciples, on the other hand, the Resurrection which He spoke about had an entirely different significance. It was a Messianic event which signified the dawn of the full glory that was to come. We must eliminate from the Resurrection predicted by Jesus all modern notions suggestive of an apotheosis. The contemporary consciousness understood this 'Restoration' (Acts 3.21) as a revelation of Jesus' Messiahship at the dawn of the Kingdom. Therefore when Jesus spoke of His resurrection the Disciples thought of the great Messianic Resurrection in which He as the Messiah would be raised from the dead."[1]

Nor would He be raised alone, but with His appearance would come the general Resurrection and the Judgment:

> "The 'Resurrection of the dead' was, in fine, only the mode in which the transformation of the whole form of existence was accomplished upon those who had already succumbed to death. By the coming of the Kingdom of God, however, the earthly form of existence in general must be raised to another and an incomparably higher estate. From this point of view, those also are to experience a 'resurrection' who before the great event have not succumbed to death; for by a higher power their mode of existence, too, will suddenly be transformed into another, which they will then share with those that have been awakened from death."[2]

In support of this interpretation she adduces the "primitive Christian conception" expressed by Paul in I Cor.15.50-54:

> "Flesh and blood, whether quick or dead, can in no wise have part in the Kingdom. Therefore when the hour strikes and the dead are raised incorruptible, the living also shall be changed, putting on incorruption and immortality."[3]

If this was the early Christian view, it may reasonably be accepted as that of Jesus and His disciples.

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1. Sketch, pp. 201-202.

2. ibid., pp. 205-206.

3. ibid.,p. 208.

Any complete exposition of Schweitzer's conception of Jesus' eschatology must take notice of two additional features. One is predestination.

> "The predestinarian view goes along with the eschatology. It is pushed to its utmost consequences in the closing incident of the parable of the marriage of the King's son (Matt. 22.1-14) where the man who, in response to a publicly issued invitation, sits down at the table of the King, but is recognized from his appearance as not called, is thrown out into perdition. 'Many are called but few are chosen.'"[1]

For Schweitzer this seems to mean that Jesus always recognized the overruling omnipotence of the will of God in all matters pertaining to the coming of the Kingdom. It determined how Jesus presented His message.

> "Only the phrase, 'Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand' and its variants belong to the public preaching. . . . All that goes beyond this simple phrase must be publicly presented only in parables, in order that those only, who are shown to possess predestination by having the initial knowledge which enables them to understand the parables, may receive a more advanced knowledge, which is imparted to them in a measure corresponding to their original degree of knowledge: 'Unto him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath' (Mk.4. 24-25)."[2]

This same thing crops up in the story of the rich young man, who would not give up his riches, and so rejected the Kingdom.

> "But immediately afterwards Jesus makes the suggestion, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible' (Mark 10.17-27). That is, He will not give up the hope that the young man, in spite of appearances, which are against him, will be found to have belonged to the Kingdom of God, solely in virtue of the secret all-powerful will of God."[3]

Schweitzer even finds predestination in the Beatitudes:

1. Quest, p. 352.

2. ibid., p. 352.

3. ibid., p. 353.

> "Blessed are the poor in spirit! Blessed are the meek! Blessed are the peacemakers! - that does not mean that by virtue of being poor in spirit, meek, peace-loving, they deserve the Kingdom. Jesus does not intend the saying as an injunction or exhortation, but as a simple statement of fact: in their being poor in spirit, in their meekness, in their love of peace, it is made manifest that they are predestined to the Kingdom. By the possession of these qualities they are marked as belonging to it. In the case of others (Matt.5.10-12) the predestination to the Kingdom is made manifest by the persecutions which befall them in this world."[1]

But the predestination of God does not mean that man, or even Jesus, knows who the elect are. That is why He gives His life a ransom "for many" (Mk.10.45).

> "The enigmatic πολλοί for whom Jesus died are those predestined to the Kingdom."[2]

Likewise, the coming of the Kingdom is predestined by God, and the details of its coming are subject to His almighty will. He could hasten or delay it, He could decide who should suffer the final persecutions. These facts were borne in on Jesus by the fact that the Kingdom did not come at the time He expected it.

> "That meant - not that the Kingdom was not near at hand - but that God had appointed otherwise in regard to the time of trial. He had heard the Lord's Prayer in which Jesus and His followers prayed for the coming of the Kingdom - and at the same time, for deliverance from the πειρασμός. The time of trial was not come; therefore God in His mercy and omnipotence had eliminated it from the series of eschatological events."[3]

The prayer in Gethsemane is also addressed to the possibility that God could spare even Jesus from death.

> "Here also it is once more made clear that for Jesus the necessity of His death is grounded in dogma, not in external

1. Quest, p. 353. See also, p. 161.

2. Quest, p. 388.

3. Quest, p. 387.

> historical facts. Above the dogmatic eschatological necessity, however, there stands the omnipotence of God, which is bound by no limitations. As Jesus in the Lord's Prayer had taught His followers to pray for deliverance from the πειρασμός, and as in His fears for the three He bids them pray for the same thing, so now He Himself prays for deliverance, even in this last moment when He knows that the armed band which is coming to arrest Him is already on the way. Literal history does not exist for Him, only the will of God; and this is exalted even above eschtological necessity."[1]

To be sure, these last instances go beyond the usual meaning of the term predestination, and Schweitzer does not actually use it here. But this emphasis on God's omnipotence is the same as in the other cases. And they show in what sense Schweitzer considers Jesus bound by eschatology and by God's holy will.

Closely related to this thought is Schweitzer's conception of the meaning of the sacraments. In a way, the latter represent the reverse side of predestination. Here the idea is that of "sealing" the elect unto the Kingdom, so that they may have assurance of coming through the tribulation and the judgment, and into the Kingdom which they usher in. Schweitzer traces this concept back to the Passover in Egypt, and finds the first eschatological expression of it in Ezekiel 9, then follows it through the Psalms of Solomon, Paul, and Revelation to the Shepherd of Hermas. He concludes,

> "it may be assumed in advance that it will be found in some form or other in the so strongly eschatological teaching of Jesus and the Baptist."[2]

To demonstrate this with regard to the Baptist is fairly easy:

> "It is a mistake to regard baptism with water as a 'symbolic

1. Quest, p. 390.

2. Quest, p. 376. See the discussion beginning on p. 375.

> act' in the modern sense, and make the Baptist decry his own wares by saying, 'I baptize only with water, but the other can baptize with the Holy Spirit'. He is not contrasting the two baptisms, but connecting them - he who is baptized by him has the certainty that he will share in the outpouring of the Spirit which shall precede the judgment, and at the judgment shall receive forgiveness of sins, as one who is signed with the mark of repentance. The object of being baptized by him is to secure baptism with the Spirit later."[1]

He might have added,though he did not, that a similar connection is found in Acts, as for example in Peter's call to baptism at Pentecost, and later the remarkable instance of the conversion of Cornelius, who received the Spirit , and so had to be given water baptism.

But when it comes to Jesus' sacrament, Schweitzer's interpretation is, to say the least, far-fetched. He begins reasonably enough with the idea of the Messianic feast, which is certainly an eschatological concept, and was originally a part of the joys of the future Kingdom. In a long footnote, he traces it from Isaiah through Enoch and the Testament of Levi to Matthew and Revelation.[2] So far, all this is good research, and the Matthew passages[3] can be rightly taken to establish Jesus' acquaintance with this particular phase of the Messianic hope. Likewise, in Das Abendmahlsproblem, he seems justified in finding a reference to the same thought in Jesus' "eschatologische Schlusswort" at the Lord's Supper:

> "Truly I tell you that I shall not again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."[4]

Not quite so certain is his next step: the fact that, in Mark, this

1. Quest, p. 376.

2. See Quest, p. 377. This footnote is in the first edition only.

3. Matthew 8.11-12, 22.1-14, 25.1-13.

4. Mark 14.25.

statement follows so closely after the "parable" of the "blood of the new covenant" (Mk.14.24), leads him to ascribe some kind of eschatological significance to the Supper itself:

> "Nicht von seinem Tod, sondern von seinem Tod und der baldigen Wiedervereinigung mit ihnen beim Mahle im neuen Reich hat Jesus zuden Seinen geredet. . . . . Beim letzten Mahl handelt Jesus als Messias. und zwar als leidender Messias."[1]

But just what this connection means he leaves to be discovered in the sequel, that is, the Sketch.

When we turn to the latter, however, we find this matter discussed, interestingly enough, not in connection with the concluding events in Jerusalem, but much sooner, in what is usually called the feeding of the 5000 (or the 4000, for to Schweitzer these are doublets of the same event). Of this event, he insists:

> "The occasion was a solemn cultus-meal!"[2]

He arrives at this astonishing conclusion because

> "The description of the distribution of the bread in the two cases corresponds perfectly."[3]

Are we to believe,then, that on no other occasion when Jesus ate with His disciples, He blessed, brake, or distributed the bread? The fact that Mark mentions no other such occasion can hardly prove that Jesus' action in these two cases is unique, especially in the face of Luke 24.30-31, where the disciples at Emmaus are represented as recognizing Him by the fact that He acted in this apparently habitual way. Schweitzer would seem here to fall under his own condemnation of the "liberals":

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1. Das Abendmahlsproblem, pp. 61 & 62.
2. Sketch, p. 169. Schweitzer also italicized this sentence.
3. Sketch, p. 170.

> "In reality, however, there is not a word of all this in the Evangelist, and when his interpreters are asked what are the hints and indications on which they base their assertions they have nothing to offer save argumenta e silentio."[1]

Indeed, it is most surprising that he should advance as historical a theory that first finds expression in the Fourth Gospel (ch.6), where the story of the miraculous feeding leads up to the discourse on the "bread of life". But that is just what he does, although of course on different grounds. He goes on:

> "Hence the solemn act of distribution constitutes the essence, as well of that meal by the seashore, as of that last meal with His disciples. The 'Lord's Supper' is a name appropriate to both, for that meal by the sea also took place at the evening hour. Mk.6.35: And when the day was now far spent His disciples came to Him, etc. Here the table-company is composed of the great multitude of believers in the Kingdom: at the Last Supper it was limited to the circle of the disciples. The celebration, however, was the same."[2]

And its meaning?

> "As one who knew Himself to be the Messiah, and would be manifested to them as such at the imminent dawn of the Kingdom, He distributes, to those whom He expects to join Him at the Messianic banquet, sacred food, as though He would give them therewith an earnest of their participation in that future solemnity."[3]

In this sense, then, the multitude are "sealed" unto the Kingdom by this "eschatological sacrament". And this is also, as it turns out, the expected solution to the Abendmahlsproblem:

> "The supper by the seaside and the supper at Jerusalem therefore correspond completely, except that in the latter Jesus signified to His disciples the nature of the ceremony and at the same time expresses the thought of the Passion in the two parables ('my body - my blood'). The cultus-meal was the same: a foretaste of the Messianic banquet in

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1 Quest, p. 330.

2. Sketch, p. 170.

3. Sketch, p. 172. All italicized.

> the circle of the fellowship of the believers in the Kingdom. Now for the first time one is able to understand how the nature of the Last Supper can be independent of the two parables."[1]

As a matter of fact, however, this theory, as well as being far-fetched, defeats itself. For if Jesus had already once"sealed" the disciples into the Kingdom on the shores of Galilee, what possible motive could He have for repeating the process before His death? If the analogy with John's baptism is correct, then one celebration of the sacrament should be sufficient for each individual. And so far as we know, all of the twelve were present at the feeding of the multitude. This would make the Last Supper superfluous. At the same time, Schweitzer's solution does not explain how the early church came to repeat the sacrament, for if it depended on the distribution of the elements by the Messiah-to-be, then there could be no point in celebrating it when He was not present. Thus, in the end, although apparently without knowing it, Schweitzer has placed himself in the anomalous position of trying so hard to avoid the horns of his own dilemma[2] that he has impaled himself on both! By seeking a new principle which should explain both what Jesus was attempting to do in the upper room and how the early church came to repeat it, he has succeeded in explaining neither.

2. The Mysteries of the life of Jesus.

In the above discussion of the Lord's Supper, we have discovered the biggest stumbling-block to Schweitzer's reconstruction of the life of Jesus - his penchant for mysteries, the solution of

1. Sketch, pp. 173-174.

2. See Das Abendmahlsproblem, pp.37-38, and above p. 12.

which is obscure, and only to be discovered by clever deductions from very meagre clues. In all, he finds three distinct mysteries to be solved. He calls them the Mystery of the Kingdom of God, the Mystery of the Messiahship, and the Mystery of the Passion. He chose the latter two: Das Messianitäts- und Leidensgeheimnis, as the title of his sketch of the life of Jesus in the German. Lowrie, taking note of the first, called his English translation of it The Mystery of the Kingdom of God, although in the text he usually translates Geheimnis by Secret.

a. The Mystery of the Kingdom of God.

Schweitzer had observed, in his study of Matthew ch.10, that Jesus' predittions were not fulfilled - for the disciples did return from their mission, and the Son of Man still had not come. What led Jesus to make this prediction? Why did He expect the Kingdom to come at just that time? Schweitzer finds the answer in the first of the three mysteries, that of the Kingdom of God.

This notion of a "mystery of the Kingdom of God" he finds in Mark 4.11: "To you the mystery of the Kingdom of God has been given, but to those outside all things come in parables." Jesus spoke these words to His disciples after telling the parable of the sower. But for Schweitzer, as for most scholars,

> "The detailed interpretation of the description of this loss (of the seed), and the application to particular classes of men, as it lies before us in Mk.4.13-20 is the product of a later view which perceived no longer any secret in the parables."[1]

So he must discover the mystery elsewhere:

1. Sketch, pp.107-108.

> "The mystery must therefore contain the explanation why the Kingdom must now come, and how men are to know how near it is. For the general fact that it is very near had already been openly proclaimed both by the Baptist and Jesus. The mystery, therefore, must consist of something more than that."[1]

And the "something more" is that Jesus expected the Kingdom, for which John the Baptist had sown the seed in the spring, to come at the time of the summer harvest! Here surely Schweitzer's ingenuity gets the better of his good sense. It is one thing to say that

> "the Kingdom of God must follow as certainly as harvest follows seed-sowing",[2]

and quite another to deduce from it:

> "If we look into the thought more closely we see that the coming of the Kingdom of God is not only symbolically or analogically, but also really and temporally connected with the harvest."[3]

Nor does the introduction at this point of Matt.9:37-38:

> "The harvest is great, but the labourers few, therefore pray the Lord of the harvest that He may send labourers into His harvest",[4]

which occurs just before the mission of the twelve, really give any support to this theory. That a certain non sequitur is involved, Schweitzer himself seems to realize, for he attempts to confirm his argument with what is obviously intended as a conclusive statement:

> "Whatever may be thought of this attempt to divine historically the secret of the Kingdom of God, there is one thing that cannot be got away from, viz. that the initial fact to which Jesus points, under the figure of the sowing,

1. Quest, pp.353-354.
2. ibid., p. 354.
3. ibid., p. 355.
4. ibid., p. 355.

> is somehow or other connected with the eschatological preaching of repentance, which had been begun by the Baptist."[1]

Yet even this is a supposition, ingenious but not cogent, the sort of "key" which Schweitzer must have in order to solve historical problems. It is certainly very poor evidence in support of the contention that Jesus expected the Kingdom at that particular time.

No more conclusive is his interpretation of the notably difficult passage about forcing the Kingdom, which he brings in at this point. The saying was spoken, according to Matthew, while the twelve were still away on their mission, and just after Jesus' enigmatic reply to the messengers of the Baptist. He said:

> "From the days of John the Baptist even until now, the Kingdom of Heaven is subjected to violence, and the violent wrest it to themselves."[2]

Schweitzer takes this to mean that

> "It is the host of penitents (now responding to the preaching of the twelve) which is wringing it from God, so that it may now come at any moment."[3]

This idea is more fully developed in the Sketch, where he traces it back to an old scribal tradition:

> "By the observance of the Law the promised glorious estate is to be wrung from God. Not the individual but the collectivity influences God through the Law. This generic mode of thought is the primary, the individual mode is secondary. 'Israel would be redeemed if only it observed two Sabbaths faithfully' (Schabbath 118b. Wünsche, System der altsynagogalen Palestinensischen Theologie, 1880, p. 299)."[4]

We must return to this complex of ideas when we consider Schweitzer's

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1. Quest, p. 355.

2. Matt.11.12.

3. Quest, pp.355-356.

4. Sketch, pp.113-114.

special theory of Interim-ethics.* For the present it is sufficient to point out that all this is further assertion, rather than proof, of the theory that Jesus actually expected the Kingdom to come at that particular time.1

From the foregoing discussion, it will appear how little real historical basis there is for Schweitzer's reconstruction of the central events in the life of Jesus, on which his whole structure is built. There is the one solid text: "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes" (Matt.10.23), which first caught his attention, and which, it must be conceded, may well be genuine. But it is one thing to recognize that it presents a problem, and demands a hitherto neglected acknowledgement of eschatology in Jesus' thought, and quite another to use it for a clue out of which to spin a whole new explanation of His life. The latter method belongs rather to the field of detective fiction than to scholarly historical research.

Moreover, this predilection for mysteries and ingenious solutions is hardly justifiable in one who writes with such scorn of the

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1. The statement in Mark 13.32: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father", cannot be used against Schweitzer in this connection for two reasons: (1) it is found in Mark 13, the "Synoptic apocalypse" which Schweitzer, along with many other scholars, considers doubtful: "Even though it may contain single eschatological sayings attributable to Jesus, the discourse as such is necessarily unhistorical. It betrays the perspective of the time after Jesus' death." (Sketch, p.246). (It is ironical to note that Schweitzer, the champion of "thoroughgoing" eschatology, finds it necessary to reject the most eschatological passage in the gospels!); and (2) even if this particular saying is genuine, it was uttered much later, after Jesus' disappointment about the non-appearance of the Kingdom, which we are here discussing, and so may reflect His disappointment on that occasion, and greater caution because of it. Schweitzer frequently finds such a cautious attitude in Jesus' later sayings. Cf. also the suggestion about the omnipotence of God, to which all eschatological details are subject, above pp. 126-127.

* See pp. 159ff.

"special knowledge" of the writers of the "liberal" lives. For instance:

> "Schenkel is able to give these explanations because he knows the most secret thoughts of Jesus and is therefore no longer bound to the text."[1]
>
> "Although Mark never allows a single word to escape him about the motives of the northern journeys, Weiss is so clever at reading between the lines that the motives are quite sufficiently' clear to him."[2]
>
> "It was doubtless from the same private source of information that the author derived his knowledge regarding the gradual development of the thought of the Passion in the consciousness of Jesus."[3]

To be sure, Schweitzer does take care to read the lines before he starts filling in between them. But his assumptions are none the less daring because for modern psychology, which was unknown in the ancient world, he substitutes a conception of Jesus' eschatology which is difficult to understand at the present day.

This is quite clear in his summary of the Mystery of the Kingdom of God:

> "The secret of the Kingdom of God which Jesus unveils in the parables about confident expectation in Mark 4, and declares in so many words in the eulogy on the Baptist (Matt.11), amounts to this, that in the movement to which the Baptist gave the first impulse, and which still continued, there was an initial fact which was drawing after it the coming of the Kingdom, in a fashion which was miraculous, unintelligible, but unfailingly certain, since the sufficient cause for it lay in the power and purpose of God. . . . . If this genuinely 'historical' interpretation of the mystery of the Kingdom of God is correct, Jesus must have expected the coming of the Kingdom at harvest time."[4]

Just to state it in this fashion is to show that Schweitzer, too,

1. Quest, p. 206.

2. ibid., p. 217.

3. ibid., p. 298.

4. ibid., p. 356.

is reading between the lines, and with as little warrant. Even if his interpretation of the parables is correct in its general import (as Otto agrees)[1], that does not guarantee the specific interpretation that Jesus expected the Kingdom at harvest time.

On this precarious foundation Schweitzer builds his explanation of Jesus' behaviour after the return of the twelve. Of O. Holtzmann's insistence that others besides the twelve went with Jesus into "exile" in the north, Schweitzer acidly remarked:

> "The value which this special knowledge, independent of the text, has for the author, becomes evident a little farther on. After Peter's confession, Jesus calls the 'multitude' to Him (Mark 8.34), and speaks to them of His sufferings and of taking up the cross and following Him. . . . . The knowledge drawn from outside the text is therefore required to solve a difficulty in the text."[2]

In the first place, Schweitzer's charge in this instance is quite unfair. Holtzmann is here making a perfectly natural inference, not, be it noted, "from outside the text", but from Mark 8.34, which stands in Mark in the midst of the passage about which he is writing. The "difficulty in the text" is apparent only to one who realizes what a problem it presents to Schweitzer's own interpretation of the passage in question. We shall see presently that Schweitzer's own solution of this particular"difficulty" is much more complicated and does violence to the text as well.* In the second place, Schweitzer feels himself quite justified in postulating that Jesus expected the Kingdom to come at a given time on just such slender evidence - the one solid verse (Matt.10.23) plus several doubtful ones, because it explains to him why Jesus "fled" from the same multitude of which

1. See The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, pp.114ff.

2. Quest, p. 297.

* Supp. 141f.

Holtzmann was writing in this passage in question, after the return of the twelve. In his case, much more than in Holtzmann's "the knowledge drawn from outside the text is required to solve a difficulty", not this time "in the text", but about the turning-point of the life of Jesus. For it is Schweitzer's contention that Jesus never expected the twelve to return from their mission. When they did, and still the Kingdom did not come, He wanted to get away from this embarrassing "multitude" and find solitude to think and pray through the difficulty. At first he tried to escape by ship across the sea of Galilee (Mark 6.30-32), but the multitude followed on foot along the shore. So then he retired further northward beyond the borders of Galilee (Mark 7.21). The solution at which He finally arrived is the Mystery of the Passion. But this Mystery of the Passion is the third of Schweitzer's mysteries. Before we can fully understand it, we must master the second, the Mystery of the messiahship, which he introduces abruptly at this point in the Sketch.[1]

b. The Mystery of the Messiahship.

This Mystery of the Messiahship goes back ultimately, as did that of the Kingdom of God, to that occasion when, during his military training, Schweitzer found himself confronted with the tenth and eleventh chapters of Matthew. John the Baptist had sent messengers to Jesus, asking, "Art thou the Coming One, or do we look for another?" and Jesus, instead of answering Yes or No, pointed to the activities in which He was engaged, in fulfillment of prophecy. Why this evasive answer? Schweitzer replies:

1. See Sketch, pp.126-127.

> "because He was not yet ready to make public Whom He believed Himself to be."[1]

Schweitzer finds himself driven to this position by a whole series of facts. One is that nobody seems to suspect that Jesus is the Messian.

> "One thing is certain: up to the time of the mission of the twelve no one had the faintest idea of recognizing in Him the Messiah. At Caesarea Philippi the disciples could only reply that the people took Him for a prophet or for Elijah the Forerunner, and they themselves knew no better, for Peter, as Jesus Himself said, did not derive his knowledge from the Master's ministry in work and word, but owed it to a supernatural revelation."[2]

Another is that, even at Jesus' trial, none of His accusers knows of His Messianic pretensions.

> "The bribed witnesses know nothing of the sort to allege. What is remarkable in their evidence - upon which too little weight has been laid - consists precisely in the fact that they in no wise charge Him with wishing to be the Messiah. For them this impious pretension exhausts itself in a disrespectful word about the temple. Let one picture to himself what the procedure of the trial would have been if the hired accusers had of themselves discovered Messianic hints in Jesus' speeches!"[3]

He is only condemned to death when He Himself admits such pretensions:

> "The High Priest put to Him the question, whether He were the Messiah. Therefore he knew of Jesus' claims."[4]

Schweitzer summarizes the facts as he sees them as follows:

> "The experience at the Baptism signified the inception of Jesus' Messianic consciousness. In the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi He revealed His secret to His disciples. It was before the High Priest that He first openly made pro-

1. My Life and Thought, p. 19.

2. Sketch, pp.127-128.

3. Sketch, pp. 131-132.

4. ibid., p. 132.

> fession of His Messianic office. Therefore the Messianic consciousness underlay all the while His preaching of the Kingdom of God. But He does not assume on the part of His hearers any knowledge of the position which belonged to Him. The faith which He required had nothing to do with His person, but it was due only to the message of the nearness of the Kingdom. It was the Fourth Evangelist who first presented the history of Jesus as if it concerned itself chiefly with His personality."[1]

But he is also aware that a great many problems are raised by this theory:

> "The problem of Jesus' Messiahship in all its difficulty may be formulated as follows: How was it possible that Jesus knew Himself as the Messiah from the beginning, and yet to the very last moment did not give in His public preaching any intimation of His Messiahship? How could it in the long run remain hidden from the people that these speeches were uttered out of a Messianic consciousness? Jesus was a Messiah who during His public ministry would not be one, did not need to be, and might not be, for the sake of fulfilling His mission! It is thus that history puts the problem."[2]

But if Jesus did not let the people in on His secret, then who did they take Him for? This is the first problem. Here again Caesarea Philippi provides the answer. Jesus asked first: "Who do men say that I am?" and they replied: "John the Baptist", or "Elijah", or "one of the prophets" (Mark 8.27-28). No one took Him for the future Messiah.

> "Conjectures of that sort were rendered completely impossible by the way in which Jesus spoke of the Messiah in the third person and as a character of the future. He intimated to the disciples as He sent them upon their mission that the Son of Man would appear before they had gone through all the cities of Israel (Matt.10.23). In Mark 8.38 He gave promise to the people of the speedy appearing of the Son of Man for judgment and the coming of the Kingdom of God with power. In the same way at Jerusalem He still spoke of the judgment which the Son of Man will hold when He appears in His glory surrounded by the angels (Matt.25.31)."[3]

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1. Sketch, p. 127.

2. Ibid., pp.134-135.

3. ibid., p. 136.

To be sure, in order to follow this through, Schweitzer has to discredit three groups of passages: (1) four Matthew passages in which Jesus is called Son of David or Son of God, which are dismissed as

> "peculiar to Matthew and belong(ing) to a secondary literary stratum"[1];

(2) three Mark passages in which demons call Him the Son of God, which are passed off with the words:

> "Who believed the devil and the wild speech of the possessed?"[2];

(3) those "Son of Man" passages where Jesus is reported to use the expression as a substitute for "I", of which six, from Matthew, are branded "secondary"[3], while two, in Mark, demand reinterpretation.[4] Here history (that is, what corresponds to Schweitzer's conception of it) becomes the decisive factor in solving literary questions:

> "All those passages are historical which show the influence of the apocalyptic reference to the Son of Man in Daniel; all are unhistorical in which such is not the case."[5]

In this he is indulging in a practice he condemned in von Soden:

> "But why should whatever is incomprehensible to us be unhistorical? Would it not be better simply to admit that we do not understand certain connections of ideas and turns of expression in the discourses of Jesus?"[6]

On the other hand, certain "Son of Man" sayings relating most nat-

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1. Sketch, p. 129.

2. ibid., p. 130.

3. ibid., pp.194-197.

4. ibid., pp.198-199.

5. ibid., p. 199.

6. Quest, p. 304. Yet in this particular instance, Schweitzer has the corroboration of E. F. Scott (The Kingdom and the Messiah, pp. 192-195), and R. Otto (The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, pp. 233-234), although W. Manson (Jesus the Messiah, pp.163ff.) doubts that all of them can be so easily disposed of.

urally to Jesus are taken by Schweitzer to be instances of His Messianic secret shining through.

> "Before the people Jesus merely suggested the absolute solidarity between Himself and the Son of Man whom He proclaimed."[1]

This, he thinks, is what led people to think of Him as Elijah.

> "Such importance as Jesus claimed for Himself belonged to only one personality, - Elijah, the mighty Forerunner, - for his manifestation stretched out of the present into the Messianic aeon and bound both together. Hence the people held that Jesus was Elijah. In this was expressed the highest estimate which Jesus' personality could wring from the masses. In this case it is not a question of one of the customary misunderstandings so beloved of the secondary gospel narrators, but the people could not, from Jesus' appearance and proclamation, come to any other conclusion about Him."[2]

This last statement ignores the fact that Mark 8.28 indicates others for whom the people did take Him. Nor is Schweitzer able to document his assertion that signs and wonders were expected of Elijah. He attempts to do this by equating Malachi 4.5, which prophesied the return of Elijah, with Joel 2.31, which describes signs of the end, on the basis of the common phrase

> "before the coming of the great and terrible Day of the Lord."[3]

But even granting the coincidence of Elijah and the signs of the end does not prove that Elijah must have produced them. On the contrary, it is the Lord who will produce the signs of Joel 2, although this passage does not, of course, preclude His use of a human agent.

Even John the Baptist is supposed to recognize Jesus as Elijah:

> "Art thou the Coming One? asked the Baptist. Jesus replied: If ye are willing to receive it, he himself is Elijah, the

1. Sketch, p. 136.

2. ibid., pp.138-139.

3. ibid., p. 141.

> Coming One! The designation of the 'Coming One' is therefore common to both speeches."[1]

and so another coincidence of language is made the basis of this contention.*

At first, it is hard to see why Schweitzer should be so insistent on this identification of Jesus with Elijah, except perhaps to counteract the usual interpretation of John's question as referring to the Messiah. The real reason becomes clear however when we reach the Triumphal Entry. There, according to Mark, Jesus is acclaimed in the words of Psalm 118.25:

> "In Mark we have two clearly distinguishable acclamations. The first is directed to the person of Jesus in their midst: 'Hosanna! Blessed be "the Coming One" in the name of the Lord" (Mark 11.9). The second refers to the expected coming of the Kingdom: 'Blessed be the coming Kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest!' The Son of David is thus not mentioned at all."[2]

The fact that Matthew includes a "Hosanna to the Son of David" just goes to show how mixed up he has become.

> "The secondary character of the account in Matthew is evident in the fact that it applies to the Son of David and to the Coming One not only an Hosanna but likewise an Hosanna in the highest, - whereby the Messiah is first assumed to be on earth and then, still in heaven."[3]

Likewise, the Matthean and Lucan accounts of the healing of Bartimaeus have to be discarded because they too contain the words "Son of David", whereas Mark's record gives a much more credible (that is, less legendary) account, and in it the offending words can be explained away.[4]

1. Sketch, p. 149.
2. Ibid., pp.156-157.
3. ibid., p. 158.
4. ibid., pp.159-160.

* See appended note, p 107a, on the dangers of such literalism.

But this Mystery of the Messiahship involves a still greater violence to the text in order, first, to resolve the doublet of the miraculous feeding, and then, to transpose the Transfiguration to a place before Peter's confession. This is quite a complicated manoeuvre. It starts with two parallel series of events:

Two feedings of a multitude followed by two voyages	Mark	6.31-56	and 8.1-22
Two encounters with Pharisees		7. 1-23	and 8.11-13
Two journeys northward		7.23-30	and 8.27
Two returns to Galilee		7.31	and 9.30-33.[1]

This is indeed a remarkable series of parallels, especially if, like Schweitzer, one concentrates on the similarities of outline and overlooks the differences, especially of detail, of which there are many. For it is only by minimizing and ignoring these latter that he could possibly reach the conclusion:

> "We have here therefore two independent accounts of the same epoch in Jesus's life. In their plan they match one another perfectly, differing only in the choice of events to be related. These two marrative series are as it were predestinated to be united instead of being placed side by side."[2]

Strange that no one before had ever felt called upon to perform the marriage!

Later on, Schweitzer finds himself compelled to admit that

> "The second cycle is incomplete and fallen somewhat into dis-

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1. Sketch, pp.165-166. If Schweitzer had really been "thoroughgoing", he could have discovered seven parallels instead of four:

Two feedings of a multitude followed by two voyages	Mark	6.34-44	and 8.1-9
		6.45-56	and 8.10
Two encounters with Pharisees		7. 1-13	and 8.11-13
and two denunciations of them		7.14-23	and 8.14-21
Two journeys northward		7.24	and 8.27
and two exorcisms		7.25-30	and 9.14-27
Two returns to Galilee		7.31	and 9.30-33.

2. Sketch, pp.165-166.

order."[1]

for it is only by rearranging the second cycle that the details can be brought into even approximate harmony with the first, to say nothing of "matching perfectly", as he had claimed. Yet he dares go on:

"Therewith the parallelism of the two series is proven."[2]

It would be more accurate to say it had been engineered.

But we are not through yet. The above only serves to eliminate the second feeding. There is still the matter of the "multitude" about which he disagreed so violently with Holtzmann.[3] Here the remarkable feature is that on some occasions, supposedly in the region of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus is with the disciples (Mark 8. 27-33), at others in the same context with the three only (Mark 9. 2-13), at still others, with no change of locality indicated, the whole multitude is present (Mark 8.34-9.1 and 9.14-29).

> "But it is not only the multitude that appears unexpectedly: the whole scenery also is altered. One finds oneself in a familiar region, for Jesus enters with His disciples 'into the house', while the people stay without (Mark 9.28)!"[4]

This, Schweitzer thinks, means that Mark 8.34-9.29

> "cannot have been enacted in <u>heathen territory</u>, but only in <u>Galilee</u>!"[5]

And because in Mark 9.30 He is represented as passing through Gali-

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1. <u>Sketch</u>, p. 167.

2. <u>Sketch</u>, p. 168.

3. See above, p. 137.

4. <u>Sketch</u>, p. 175. Were there then no houses in Caesarea Philippi where Jesus might have gone with the twelve?

5. <u>Sketch</u>, pp.175-176. Cf. <u>Quest</u>, p. 381.

lee incognito, this section

> "belongs in the Galilean period before the departure for the north, and more precisely, at the time of the return of the disciples, for it is then that He was constantly surrounded by a throng of people and was seeking to be in solitude with His disciples!"[1]

This has the effect of placing Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi after the Transfiguration, where it must stand in order to be intelligible (to his theory).

For in Schweitzer's view, Jesus never willingly revealed His Messiahship. He Himself learned of it at the Baptism. Peter, James and John learned of it by accident, at the Transfiguration, which was some kind of ecstatic experience due to their intense expectation of the immediate coming of the Kingdom.[2] At Caesarea Philippi, although Jesus had solemnly charged the three to tell it to no man (Mark 9.9), Peter revealed to the twelve this secret which "flesh and blood had not revealed to him" (Matt.16.17). Later on, Judas betrayed this secret to the High Priest who could not prove it against Jesus at the trial because he had no witnesses.

> "To be Elijah, the prophet of the last times, was no religious crime. But to claim to be the Messiah, that was blasphemy! The perfidy of the charge lay in the High Priest's insinuation that Jesus held Himself then to be the Messiah, just as He stood there before Him. This Jesus repudiated with a proud word about His coming as Son of Man. Nevertheless He was condemned for blasphemy."[3]

It thus appears that whatever advantages this theory of the Mystery of the Messiahship may afford, in the way of making certain scenes

1. Sketch, p. 176. To Schweitzer, apparently, the disciples are always synonymous with the twelve.

2. Sketch, pp.181-182, or Quest, pp.383-384. It appears that Schweitzer is also capable of psychologizing at the right moments.

3. Sketch, p. 217.

and events in the life of Jesus more "historically" probable, the theory itself rests on very questionable foundations. But on the whole, it is not a necessary part of the eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus. That is, the recognition of an eschatological cast of thought in Jesus does not require acceptance of this "Mystery", nor does it depend upon it, as is evident from the fact that most writers who take account of Jesus' eschatology never even mention the idea of a Messianic "secret".[1]

c. The Mystery of the Passion.

We now return to the Mystery of the Passion - the third of the "mysteries" by which Schweitzer seeks to explain the life of Jesus.

> "In the secret of His Passion which Jesus reveals to the disciples at Caesarea Philippi the pre-Messianic tribulation is for others set aside, abolished, concentrated upon Himself alone, and that in the form that they are fulfilled in His own Passion and death at Jerusalem. That was the new conviction that had dawned upon Him. He must suffer for others.....that the Kingdom might come."[2]

Just when Jesus arrived at this conclusion is not clear. If Schweitzer had been willing to credit Luke with any historical value, he might have made this revelation a part of the ecstatic experience of the Transfiguration, for Luke records:

> "And behold two men were talking with Him who were Moses and Elijah, who appearing in glory spoke of the departure He was about to fulfill in Jerusalem."[3]

---

1. Otto is the only one who does mention it: "But although He Himself was the future Son of Man, He did not proclaim Himself as the Son of Man. It was God and not Himself who revealed the Son of Man as such" through the signs and wonders He performed. (The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, p. 219). Wrede, and Dibelius after him, think of the Messianic secret as an invention of Mark. Scott and Manson see in the gradual revelation of the Messiahship evidence of a development of Jesus' self-consciousness.

2. Quest, pp.386-387.

3. Luke 9.30-31.

Schweitzer had traced the Mystery of the Messiahship to a similar ecstatic experience at the Baptism.[1] As it is, he locates the new Mystery of the Passion at just about the time of the Transfiguration. For he finds the last expression of anticipation of the general afflictions in Mark 8.35-38, which, it will be remembered, is just before the Transfiguration. The first expression of the new attitude he finds in Mark 8.27-33, at Caesarea Philippi, which, as we have seen, he places after the Transfiguration.

> "With the revelation at Caesarea Philippi cease all intimations that the believers must pass with Jesus through the Affliction."[2]

Indeed, the saying about Elijah on the way down from the mount of Transfiguration seems to point in this direction:

> "How much He was preoccupied with the thought of the Baptist's death is shown by the conversation which followed the revelation to the three on the mountain. It was ordained in the Scripture that Elijah must meet such a fate at the hands of men. So also it is written of the Son of Man that He must suffer many things and be set at naught (Mark 9.12-13)."[3]

This would seem to narrow down the inception of the new Mystery of the Passion to the six days mentioned in Mark 9.2, including the Transfiguration which they introduce. But perhaps Schweitzer's reluctance to locate the revelation thus definitely at the time of the Transfiguration is that it would make the subsequent "flight" to the north inexplicable, since Jesus would already know the new mystery, according to Schweitzer's chronology, before starting north. It does not seem to occur to him that, just as the forty days of solitude in the wilderness followed the disclosure of His Messiahship at the Bap-

1. See Sketch, pp.181-182.

2. ibid., pp.230-231.

3. ibid., p. 233.

tism, so Jesus would need further time to think through the implications of this new ecstatic revelation, and the "flight" to the north would give Him that time. However, it is not the purpose of this thesis to improve on Schweitzer's theory, but to evaluate it.

And how did Jesus learn this new Mystery?

> "The delay of the eschatological coming of the Kingdom, - that was the great fact which drove Jesus at that time once and again into solitude to seek light upon the mystery.
>
> "Before the Kingdom could come the Affliction must arrive. But it failed to arrive. It must be brought about in order that the Kingdom may thus be constrained to come. Repentance and the subjugation of the power of ungodliness did not avail by themselves; but the violent stormers of the Kingdom must be reinforced by one stronger still, the future Messiah, who brings down upon Himself the final Affliction in the form in which it had already been accomplished upon Elijah. Thus the secret of the Kingdom merges in the secret of the Passion."[1]

Moreover, He thinks of the final Affliction in terms of atonement and purification:

> "But now God does not bring the Affliction to pass. And yet the atonement must be made. Then it occurred to Jesus that He as the coming Son of Man must accomplish the atonement in His own person."[2]

Here we have Schweitzer's remarkably simple and effective theory of the atonement.

> "That is the secret of the Passion. Jesus did actually die for the sins of men, even though it was in another sense than that which Anselm's theory assumes."[3]
>
> "This thought Jesus found in the prophecies of Isaiah, which spoke of the suffering Servant of the Lord."[4]

Of course, this source had already been suggested by Weisse[5], and

1. Sketch, p. 234.

2. ibid., p. 235.

3. ibid., pp.235-236.

4. Quest, p. 388.

5. See Quest, p. 132.

Strauss[1], and even traced to Rabbinical confirmation by Ghillany[2]. Schweitzer, however, makes a point of emphasizing the eschatological character of the whole of Deutero-Isaiah (ch.40-66), commencing "with the proclamation that God's reign is about to begin", followed by the presentation of the righteous elect, upon whom "God has put His Spirit" (Isa.42.1ff), and "the delineation of the suffering of the Servant of God" (Isa.49.1ff;52.1ff;53.1ff) "there follows a description of the Judgment upon the whole world and upon Israel" (Isa. 54-65), and consummated with the "glory of God.... enthroned above the new heaven and the new earth" (Isa.65-66).[3]

> "And since He found it there set down that He must suffer unrecognized, and that those for whom He suffered should doubt Him, His suffering should, nay must, remain a mystery."[4]

It involved a serious offense, because the Apostles, as well as the people generally, were expecting the future victorious Son of Man.

> "They, on their part, are thinking only of the coming transformation of all things, as their conversation shows. The prospect which He has opened up to them is clear enough; the only thing that they do not understand is why He must first die at Jerusalem. The first time that Peter ventured to speak to Him about it, He had turned on him with a cruel harshness, had almost cursed him (Mark 8.32-33); from that time forward they no longer dared to ask Him anything about it."[5]

So Jesus goes to Jerusalem to face death, indeed to provoke the authorities to put Him to death.

"That is why He violently cleanses the Temple, and attacks the

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1. See Quest, p. 198.

2. See Quest, p. 168.

3. See Sketch, pp.236-238.

4. Quest, p. 388.

5. ibid., p. 389.

> Pharisees, in the presence of the people, with passionate invective."[1]

Thus He expects to compel the coming of the Kingdom, of which He expects to be the Messiah. This is a bold reading of the gospel records. For they do not tell us that Jesus tried to provoke His death, but only that He foresaw its necessity, and submitted to it. Indeed, the prayer in Gethsemane sounds like a last desperate attempt to escape its necessity. Nevertheless, in contrast with the other two "Mysteries", this one is not only ingenious - it is an at least possible reading of the recorded facts. It involves less reading between the lines - for what the disciples did not understand before Jesus' death, the doctrine of the atonement, became the chief subject of their preaching afterwards. It also involves no violence to the text. But it shares one obvious defect with the Mystery of the Kingdom of God, on which it is based: The Kingdom did not come in apocalyptic form at the time of the Resurrection any more than it did at the time of the harvest, and so, although Schweitzer carefully refrains from saying so, according to his theory Jesus died in vain. That He rose from the dead individually, that His followers founded the church which bears His name, that He Himself lives in the lives of true Christians - all these, wonderful as they are, do not fulfill the purpose for which He died, if Schweitzer is right.

And so we must take up again, and settle conclusively, if possible, this point which has been pressing for discussion all through this thesis: the problem of Jesus' alleged mistakes, which figure so largely in Schweitzer's interpretation. They present us with a

1. Quest, p. 389.

dilemma of the kind Schweitzer loves. One horn we have already hinted at in a previous connection: if Jesus was mistaken about the time and manner of the coming of the Kingdom, which occupies such a central and all-important place in His expectations, according to Schweitzer, we have no guarantee that He was correct about any other part of the truth of God.* In particular, we have no assurance that He was right about being the Messiah-to-be. He may have been just as much mistaken about this "Mystery" as He was proved to be about the other two. Schweitzer believes that this Mystery was disclosed to Him in the ecstatic experience following the Baptism. But ecstatic experiences are notoriously easy to misinterpret. Yet if He was not the Messiah-to-be, then He loses a great deal of His authority for us, for then He was just what the people took Him for - a wandering prophet or teacher, and a mistaken one at that - and Schweitzer's claim to rescue Him from the humanizers and to restore His heroic greatness is proven false: on the contrary, he has reduced it still further. Moreover, Jesus may also have been mistaken about the atoning value of His Passion. He certainly was wrong, if Schweitzer is right, about expecting His death to bring in the Kingdom without the tribulation. He may also have been wrong about His life being a ransom for the guilt of sin, and in that case, we have no warrant to expect salvation, or even forgiveness of sins, through Him. In sum, if Schweitzer is right about Jesus' eschatological conception of His mission, then the religion of Jesus has no sure claim upon any one. That is one horn of the dilemma.

But Schweitzer seeks to avoid it by showing how "Christianity" developed out of the failure of Jesus' expectations. He writes:

"While Jesus' Secret brought His death and the dawning of

*Sup. 52.

> the Kingdom into the closest temporal and causal connection, for the primitive Church, on the other hand, a past event, as such, constituted the object to be explained, since the Kingdom had not arrived and the original causal connection was dissolved along with the temporal."[1]

He goes on further:

> "The abolition of the causal connection between the death of Jesus and the realisation of the Kingdom was fatal to the early Christian eschatology."[2]

This leads him finally to conclude:

> "In the fact that subsequent history compulsorily created in the Church an uneschatological view of the world, it only accomplished what in the nature of things was already determined by Jesus' death.
>
> "The death of Jesus the end of eschatology! The Messiah who upon earth was not such - the end of the Messianic expectation! The view of the world in which Jesus lived and preached was eschatological: the 'Christian view of the world' which He founded by His death carries mankind forever beyond eschatology! That is the great secret of the Christian 'scheme of salvation.'"[3]

This is the climax toward which the whole argument of the Sketch has been working. It will readily be seen that, as in the Quest, it puts Christianity in the paradoxical position of being founded by the "historical Jesus" and yet independent of all the great aims and purposes for which He lived and died! Thus, like Schleiermacher, who concealed the offence of His observations about the Lord's Supper[4], and the rationalism of his Life of Jesus[5], beneath his brilliant dialectic, so Schweitzer seeks to overcome the difficulty of his mistaken Jesus. But in doing so, he comes down squarely on the other horm of the dilemma. In an unguarded sentence earlier in the above closing diseus-

1. Sketch, pp.242-243.
2. ibid., p. 245.
3. ibid., pp.247-248.
4. See Das Abendmahlsproblem, pp.vi-vii.
5. See Quest, p. 200.

sion, he had spoken of

> "the necessary distortion which Jesus' idea of the Passion underwent in the Primitive Church."[1]

According to his view, that is just what primitive Christianity, and indeed all Christianity is: a distortion of the truth as Jesus understood it. But how can a distortion have any claim upon us either? For if Jesus was right, then the early Church was wrong, and we have been wrong to follow in its footsteps. If Jesus was wrong, that still does not make the early Church right, and therefore we are still worse off. Thus it would appear that Christianity has no right to the name of Christianity at all, but should be called "Petrinity" or "Paulinity" or "Johannninity" according to the interpretation followed. Thus Schweitzer is forced by his own theory to give up not only the historical Jesus, but also historical Christianity.

To escape this dilemma, he has to give up completely any hope of truth in Jesus' Weltanschauung, and make our relationship to Him entirely a matter of the will:

> "Knowledge of spiritual truth is not called upon to prove its genuineness by showing further knowledge about the events of world-history and matters of ordinary life. Its province lies on a quite different level from the latter's, and it is quite independent of it.
>
> "The historical Jesus moves us deeply by His subordination to God."[2]

Or, expressed in more philosophical terms;

> "Das letzte und tiefste Wissen von den Dingen kommt aus dem Willen. Darum wird das Denken, das die letzten Synthesen der Beobachtungen und Erkenntnisse zu ziehen sucht, um zu einer Weltanschauung zu gelangen, in seiner Richtung durch den Willen bestimmt, der das primäre und weiter nicht erklärliche Wesen der betreffenden Persönlichkeiten und Zeiten ausmacht."[3]

1. Sketch, pp. 244-245.

2. My Life and Thought, p. 72.

3. Quest, Ger. ed., p. 636.

Thus, even before Barth, we have Schweitzer foreshadowing the Barthian emphasis on obedience rather than understanding. That it was sufficient for Schweitzer is proved by his magnificent self-sacrifice in later years. But many will find this extreme denial of any significance to the historical Jesus most unsatisfactory.

There is another way out of this dilemma. And that is to attribute the "mistakes" not to Jesus, but to the author of the eschatological interpretation of His life. For in the last analysis, the dilemma is based, not on the religion of Jesus, nor even upon the fact that He thought and expressed Himself in eschatological terms, but upon Schweitzer's explanation of the history by means of his three "Mysteries". They are the source of the idea that Jesus was mistaken about the time and manner of the coming of the Kingdom, and also of the corollary idea that the faith of the primitive church was a distortion. Without them or similar leaps of intuition it is quite possible that the details of the life of Jesus may always be historically insoluble, but at least the life as a whole will be a strong enough foundation to support the edifice of Christianity which has been built upon it.

3. Interim-ethic.

Up to this point we have scarcely mentioned how Schweitzer's theory affects his understanding of Jesus' ethical teaching. From his writings this would seem a relatively unimportant point. In the Quest, the subject is only barely mentioned, and then not for its own sake, but rather in connection with the doctrine of predestination.[1]

1. See Quest, pp352-353.

We might, therefore,have treated it along with the secondary points towards the end of the first section of this chapter. But it is really much more important than his treatment would seem to indicate. He has purposely minimized it, as the discussion of it in the Sketch reveals.

The reason he does so is that ethics were all-important to the "modern-historical" school, whose interpretation he had found so unsatisfactory. Among their basic assumptions, which he lists only to refute, he includes:

> "3. The conception of the Kingdom of God as a self-fulfilling ethical society in which service is the highest law dominated the idea of the Passion."[1]

To disppove this, he takes up first Mark.10.41-45, the chief passage on which this assumption is based. It is Jesus' comment to the disciples on the attempt of the sons of Zebedee to get Him to promise them the chief seats in the Kingdom. It closes with the words:

> "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."[2]

On another similar occasion, He had replied with the object-lesson of the little child:

> "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven."[3]

The liberals had taken this to mean that

> "Self-humiliation and the meekness of service, such is the new morality of the Kingdom of God which comes into force through Jesus' service unto death."[4]

1. Sketch, p. 63.

2. Mark 10.45.

3. Matthew 18.4.

4. Sketch, pp.73-74.

But Schweitzer will have none of this. His thought, dominated as he claimed Jesus' was, by the idea that the Kingdom is wholly future, insists

> "With this, however, the fact is ignored that the Kingdom in which one reigns is thought of as a future thing, whereas the service applies to the present!"[1]

This is the fundamental thought behind Schweitzer's theory of Jesus' ethics: the completely future and transcendent Kingdom, breaking in on the present order from without. Therefore ethics, which have to do with the present age, are useful only in preparation for the coming Kingdom.

The liberals have been led astray, Schweitzer thinks, by the Lucan parallel, which has been transferred to the context of the Last Supper (Luke 22.24-27), and has, in the process, lost the sense of distinction between the "now" and "then".

> "In the case of the two oldest Synoptists, however, it is not at all a question of the proclamation of the new morality of the Kingdom of God, where serving is ruling; rather it is a question of the significance of humility and service <u>in expectation of the Kingdom of God</u>. Service is the fundamental law of <u>interim-ethics</u>."[2]

Schweitzer minimizes the importance of Jesus' ethics also because to his mind ethics and eschatology are somehow incompatible:

> "The concurrence in Jesus of an ethical with an eschatological line of thought has always constituted one of the most difficult problems of New Testament study. How can two such different views of the world, in part diametrically opposed to one another, be united in <u>one</u> process of thought?"[3]

1. <u>Sketch</u>, p. 74.

2. <u>ibid</u>., p. 76.

3. <u>ibid</u>., p. 84.

In this feeling he is not alone. As he points out, the liberals had tried to strengthen the ethics either by eliminating or sublimating the eschatology. He cites Colani and Volkmar as examples of the former[1], and Haupt as an instance of the latter.[2] And his criticism is, on the whole, just. But that fact does not justify him in overstating the opposite case as he does:

> "The eschatological thought, if it be taken seriously, abrogates the ethical train of thought. It accepts no subordinate place."[3]

He does not mean, as he seems to do, that Jesus had no ethical message, Rather he is thinking of "ethical" as opposed to "eschatological", for he goes on:

> "Jesus, however, must have thought either eschatologically or uneschatologically, but not both together."[4]

It is this identification of the ethical with the "modern" uneschatological view which prompts him to subordinate the ethics of Jesus as he does.

On the other hand, he considers it a mark of superiority in his theory that, while the ethical view of the Kingdom tended to eliminate the eschatology altogether, his eschatological view still left room for the ethics, even though it reduces them in importance.

> "In what relation, however, did His ethics and His eschatology stand to each other? So long as one starts with the ethics and seeks to comprehend the eschatology as something adventitious, there appears to be no organic connection between the two, since the ethic of Jesus, as we are accustomed to con-

1. Sketch, p. 84.

2. ibid., p. 85.

3. ibid., p. 86.

4. ibid., p. 86.

> ceive it, is not in the least accommodated to the eschatology but stands upon a much higher level. One must therefore take the opposite course and see if the ethical proclamation in essence is not conditioned by the eschatological view of the world."[1]

He now states the case positively:

> "If the thought of the eschatological realisation of the Kingdom is the fundamental factor in Jesus' preaching, His whole theory of ethics must come under the conception of repentance as a preparation for the coming of the Kingdom."[2]

But he makes it clear that he means more by repentance than the word usually connotes:

> "It is a moral renewal in prospect of the accomplishment of universal perfection in the future."[3]

It also

> "comprises all positive ethical requirements"[4],

and it is

> "the lively echo of the 'repentance' of the early prophets. For what Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah mean by repentance is moral renovation in prospect of the Day of the Lord."[5]

This last phrase, however, is decidedly misleading. For while Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah all mention the "Day of the Lord" as a motive for repentance, their primary interest is in the moral renovation, rather than the eschatological event. The passage which Schweitzer quotes in support of his statement as typical (Isa.1.16-17) brings out clearly the need of moral renewal, but does not even mention the Day of the Lord. And in other passages where the Day of

1. Sketch, pp.92-93.
2. ibid., p. 94.
3. ibid., p. 94.
4. ibid., pp.94-95.
5. ibid., p. 95.

the Lord is mentioned, as, for instance, in Isaiah 13.9:

> "Behold, the Day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it",

it is mentioned as a day of punishment, as a warning to choose righteousness in order to escape condemnation. So Schweitzer is right in saying:

> "It is precisely this Old Testament conception of repentance, with its emphasis upon the new moral life, which one must have in mind in order to understand aright the Synoptical repentance."[1]

But his implication is wrong when he adds:

> "Both have a forward vision, both are dominated by the thought of a condition of perfection which God will bring to pass through the Judgment."[2]

Even in the apocalyptic period, which Schweitzer does not mention at this point, the shift in emphasis is more apparent than real. Much greater attention is paid to the details of the rewards of the righteous and the punishments of the wicked, and in general the purpose of apocalyptic is to encourage the righteous to remain stedfast even in the face of defeat and death, rather than to warn the wicked of the punishment that awaits them. But even when these facts are duly noted, apocalyptic still uses eschatology as a motive for ethical action.

Schweitzer is right to deal with the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount as repentance in the prophetic sense. It is, indeed,

> "The new morality, which detects the spirit beneath the letter, (and) makes one meet for the Kingdom of God."[3]

1. Sketch, p. 95.
2. ibid., p. 95.
3. ibid., p. 95.

And he is right to find eschatological references in it:

> "Only he who has done the will of the heavenly Father can enter into the Kingdom (Mt.7.21). The claim that one is a follower of Jesus, or has even wrought signs and wonders in His name, is of no avail as a substitute for this new righteousness (Mt.7. 22-23)."[1]

We have already had occasion to note his predestinarian use of the Beatitudes:*

> "Blessed are the meek, those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the poor in spirit, those that endure persecution for righteousness' sake, because such character and conduct is their security that with the appearing of the Kingdom of God they will be found to belong to it."[2]

Yet, after all, there would really be little point in Jesus' making these statements unless He hoped thereby to influence His disciples to seek these virtues. They are not just theological observations, uttered to satisfy the curiosity of His hearers. They have a definite ethical purpose, and the eschatology, when it is mentioned, is introduced as a further motive for obedience to the demands of the new morality.

The emphasis is different in the parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price (Mt.13.44-46) which Schweitzer introduces at this point. Here, it should be noted, the primary interest is in eschatology rather than ethics, for these are "parables of the Kingdom", and not part of the Sermon on the Mount. Schweitzer thinks they "illustrate the same point"[3] because he insists that Jesus was thinking primarily of eschatology when He uttered the Sermon,

1. Sketch, p. 96.
2. ibid., pp.96-97.
3. ibid., p. 97.

* See p. 126.

too. That is why he states:

> "As repentance unto the Kingdom of God the ethics also of the Sermon on the Mount is interim-ethics."[1]

This is now the second time that Schweitzer has used this term "interim-ethics" without defining it. In point of fact he never does so. Apparently he thinks it is self-explanatory. The translator of the Quest has paraphrased it as

> "the special ethics of the interval before the coming of the Kingdom."[2]

And this is a very fair rendering. It reveals why Schweitzer considers the ethics of Jesus relatively unimportant for the understanding of the history, for he states that

> "the thought of Jesus . . had to do above all with the immediateness of the transition from the condition of moral renewal into the super-moral perfection of the Kingdom of God"[3],

where no ethics will be needed.

He seems to be aware that this treatment will not be sufficient for most scholars, for he now proceeds to discuss in detail the contrast between "The Ethics of Jesus and Modern Ethics."[4] He pays his respects to "The depth of Jesus' religious ethics"[5], and avers:

> "With respect to its eternal inward truth it is indeed independent of history and unconditioned by it, since it already contains the highest ethical thoughts of all times."[6]

This high appraisal explains how Schweitzer can adopt the ethics of Jesus as his own, and give himself to African medical missions as

1. Sketch, p. 97.
2. Quest, p. 352.
3. Sketch, p. 99.
4. Sketch, p. 99.
5. Sketch, p. 99.
6. Sketch, p. 99.

a Christian service. But he still insists that this thought of "unconditional" ethics is modern, and that,

> "The ethics of Jesus on the other hand is 'conditional', in the sense that it stands in indissoluble connection with the expectation of a state of perfection which is to be supernaturally brought about."[1]

The reason for this insistence appears in this sentence:

> "If we once perceive the conditional character of Jesus' ethics, and seriously consider its connection with the ethics of the prophets, it is immediately clear that all conceptions of the Kingdom as a growth out of small beginnings, all notions about an ethics of the Kingdom, or about the development of it, have been foisted upon Jesus by our modern consciousness."[2]

Thus it becomes clear that Schweitzer's reason for minimizing the ethics of Jesus is not any failure to appreciate their intrinsic value, but the use the "moderns" have made of them. For him there can be no question of achieving the Kingdom in the present world by ethical behaviour, progressively. There can be no "ethics of the Kingdom" in that sense.

> "For Jesus and the prophets, however, it was a thing impossible. In the immediateness of their ethical view there is no place for a morality of the Kingdom of God or for a development of the Kingdom - it lies beyond the borders of good and evil; it will be brought about by a cosmic catastrophe through which evil is to be completely overcome. Hence all moral criteria are to be abolished. <u>The Kingdom of God is super-moral</u>."[3]

It is really rather remarkable that Schweitzer, at the beginning of the present century, when faith in inevitable human progress was at its peak, should have come out so strongly against it. Subsequent history has proved him right. For Germany, the home of the great liberal scholars, whose faith in human progress was matched by

1. <u>Sketch</u>, p. 100. 2. <u>ibid.</u>, p. 101. 3. ibid., pp.101-102.

their country's faith in her Kultur, has turned out in two World Wars to stand for the opposite of the Christian ethic, and has shown that automatic human progress, as well as her own national and racial supremacy, is just a myth. Schweitzer saw this coming as early as 1899. In a remarkable passage in My Life and Thought, he describes how he first came to the realisation of it.[1] Later it was to drive him to write his monumental work on the Philosophy of Civilisation (Kulturphilosophie), the final volume of which is expected to appear this summer (1948). Certainly no one looking at the state of the world today can continue to believe in the inevitability of human progress, and he must needs be indeed a sanguine liberal who can still have faith in the possibility that humankind, by sufficient devotion to the ethics of Jesus, can produce a "Kingdom of God on earth."

On the other hand, in his anxiety to state his case, there can be no doubt that Schweitzer has overstated it. This can be readily seen from the fact that few subsequent writers, if any, have been willing to follow him in his description of Jesus' ethics as "interim-ethics". He would no doubt ascribe this reluctance to

> "a prejudice against this conception of conditional ethics,"[2]

which he tries to overcome by the assertion that

> "It is an unjustified prejudice if it is due to a suspicion that Jesus' ethics is thereby disparaged. Exactly the opposite is the case. For this conditionality springs from an absolute ethical idealism, which postulates for the expected state of perfection conditions of existence which are themselves ethical. . . So, to render the ethics of Jesus unconditional and self-sufficing is not only unhistorical, but it means also the degradation of His ethical idealism."[3]

1. My Life and Thought, pp. 172-174.

2. Sketch, p. 103.

3. ibid., p. 103.

Yet even Schweitzer confesses to share this "prejudice" at one point:

> "If ethics has to do only with the expectation of the supernatural consummation, its actual worth is diminished, since it is merely individual ethics and is concerned only with the relation of each single person to the Kingdom of God. The thought, however, that the moral community which has been constituted by Jesus' preaching must be in some way the effective first stage in the realisation of the Kingdom of God - this thought belongs not alone to our ethical sentiment, but it animated also the preaching of Jesus, for He wrought out in strong relief the social character of His ethics. This explains the reluctance one feels to admit that the eschatological idea of the Kingdom of God lay at the basis of Jesus' preaching from beginning to end, since then one cannot explain how the new moral community which He formed about Himself was in His thought organically connected with the Kingdom which was supernaturally to appear."[1]

He favours this "modern line of thought" which is "completely foreign to Jesus", because

> "Even though He cannot have made use of this explanation of ours, the fact that this new community stands in an organic relation with the final stage was for Him as certain as for us."[2]

What this relation is becomes clear in connection with the Mystery of the Kingdom of God.

We have already referred in that connection to the use Schweitzer makes of Jesus' saying about forcing the Kingdom (Mt.11.12).[3] Now we learn that Jesus' ethic of "repentance in expectation of the Kingdom" is supposed to be even more. According to the secret of the Kingdom of God

> "the moral renewal hastens the supernatural coming of the Kingdom."[4]

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1. Sketch, pp.103-104.
2. Sketch, pp.104-105.
3. See above, p. 134.
4. Sketch, p. 113.

Just as, in the prophets

> "Godless behaviour brings nearer the day of Judgment and of condemnation",[1] so "When they determine to reform their ways, when they seek refuge in Him alone with trusting faith, when righteousness and truth prevail among them, then will the Lord deliver them from their oppressors, and His glory will be manifest over Israel, to whom the heathen will do service. In that day there will then be peace poured out over the whole world, over nature as well as man."[2]

This thought became, among the Pharisees, the excuse for legalism.

> "Eschatology became a problem of accounting and ethics became casuistry. Jesus, however, reached back after the fundamental conception of the prophetic period, and it is only the form in which He conceives of the emergence of the final event which bears the stamp of later Judaism".[3]

So Schweitzer sums up:

> "The secret of the Kingdom of God is therefore the synthesis effected by a sovereign spirit between the early prophetic ethics and the apocalyptic of the book of Daniel. Hence it is that Jesus' eschatology was rooted in His age and yet stands so high above it. For His contemporaries it was a question of waiting for the Kingdom, of excogitating and depicting every incident of the great catastrophe, and of preparing for the same; while for Jesus it was a question of bringing to pass the expected event through the moral renovation. Eschatological ethics is transformed into ethical eschatology."[4]

In this way, Schweitzer seeks to establish the value of Jesus' teaching which the "interim-ethic" idea might otherwise reduce. Jesus' hearers, and those of His disciples, are, by their repentance, to be the "violent" who "wrest the Kingdom unto themselves" (Mt.11.12).[5]

1. Sketch, p. 113.
2. ibid., p. 113.
3. ibid., p. 114.
4. ibid., p. 115.

5. Here Schweitzer seems to forget that in trying to establish the eschatological character of Jesus' charge to the twelve, he had written: "The commission, however, is anything but a summary of the "teaching of Jesus". It does not in the least contemplate instruction of a thoroughgoing kind, rather what is in question is a flying proclamation throughout Israel." (Sketch, p. 88). But if Jesus Himself had to explain at such length to His disciples the true character of "repentance", how could He expect the untaught repentance of the multitude to have value in forcing the Kingdom? But such small inconsistencies are bound to occur in a theory as new and sweeping as his.

> "Jesus' ethics is modern, not because the eschatology can be reduced somehow to a mere accompaniment, but precisely because the ethics is absolutely dependent upon this eschatology! The fact is, this eschatology itself, as it is exhibited in the secret of the Kingdom of God, is thoroughly modern, inasmuch as it is dominated by the thought that the Kingdom of God is to come by reason of the religious-moral renovation which the believers perform. Every moral-religious performance is therefore labour for the coming of the Kingdom of God."[1]

Does Schweitzer mean by this that if Christians in our own day would only repent and live up to Jesus' ethical teachings, the Kingdom of God would come to us? In that case, we could understand better than ever why he went to Africa. But this cannot be his meaning, in view of his insistence on the need in our day for a

> "world-view of ethical world- and life-affirmation"

in contrast to the

> "world- and life-negation"

of Jesus' eschatology.[2] Besides, it would not be logical to suppose that the Kingdom could now come on such a basis when it failed to do so for Jesus.

His theory of Jesus' ethical purpose, therefore, comes to grief on the same difficulty as his theory of the Mysteries: the "repentance" which Jesus sought to inculcate failed to bring about the Kingdom as expected. This means that the value he ascribes to Jesus' ethics is illusory, and drives him in the end to assert a present value for Jesus'"modern" ethic of love quite independent of its "historical" (i.e., eschatological) setting.

"So far as its essential spiritual and ethical nature is con-

1. Sketch, p. 122.

2. See My Life and Thought, pp.179ff.

> cerned, Christianity's religious truth remains the same through the centuries. The variations belong only to the outward form which it assumes in the ideas belonging to different world-views. Thus the religion of love which Jesus taught, and which made its first appearance as an element in the late Jewish eschatological world-view, enters later on into connection with the late-Greek, the medieval, and the modern world-views. Nevertheless, it remains through the centuries what it is essentially. Whether it is worked out in terms of one Weltanschauung or another is only a matter of relative importance. What is decisive is the amount of influence over mankind won by the spiritual and ethical truth which it has held from the very first."[1]

Such rationalisations are typical of the clever complications to which Schweitzer is forced in his efforts to save his improbable theories. It would have been much simpler for him to give up his insistent desire to solve every problem of the life of Jesus, down to the least detail. For this is the source of all his trouble. Jesus' ethics are absolute, not in spite of any eschatological expectations He may have had, as Otto also suggests[2], but because they are the will of God, as T. W. Manson suggests:

> "His ethics is no mere 'interim-ethic' to bridge the gap between the present and the future: it is the will of God which, whenever and wherever the Kingdom comes, is done on earth as it is in Heaven."[3]

This is Bultmann's view, too, although he makes more of the eschatology:

> "It is true, however, that Jesus' demands are in one point to be understood in the light of the eschatological message - namely that in them "Now" appears as the decisive hour.
>
> "This leads us to see how truly the eschatological message and the preaching of the will of God are to be comprehended as a unity."[4]

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1. My Life and Thought, pp.67-68.

2. See The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, p. 59.

3. The Mission and Message of Jesus, p. 637.

4. Jesus and the Word, P. 129.

This concept of the will of God is really much closer to the prophetic message than that of interim-ethic. For while Schweitzer is right, as Bultmann agrees, that ethics as such only have value until the coming of the Kingdom, yet he is not right in suggesting that the Kingdom abrogates them. On the contrary, the Kingdom of God is the realm of righteousness, where all behaviour will be in accord with God's will. Thus the righteousness of the Kingdom includes all the righteousness of the Law and the Prophets, and all the further righteousness of Jesus' ethical teaching, and quite probably exceeds even that lofty ideal, or at least the best understanding of it that we in this earthly age are able to achieve. So W. Manson is right when he insists that

> "The eschatologists are wrong, therefore, in their explanation of the Christian ethic. The moral law of Jesus cannot be regarded as merely preparatory to the Kingdom. Its relation to the Kingdom is much more central and binding, nor is it hard to find. In Matt.6.33, Jesus says, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom (of God) and His righteousness.' He there envisages the true righteousness as something flowing from the Kingdom, a life issuing from the new stream of Divine redemptive forces liberated in the Kingdom. Here then we find the principle connecting Christ's ethics with His teaching about the Kingdom.
>
> "The ethic of Jesus is not Interim-Ethic, but the principle which, on the inner side, constitutes the Kingdom."[1]

The most telling argument for the "interim" character of Jesus' ethical teaching is that it deals with situations which, though real in this temporary age, are not to be expected in the Kingdom. E. F. Scott deals with the question from this point of view. He concedes that

> "Jesus undoubtedly assumed that many of the conditions for which He legislated would have no existence in the future age. . . . It would be easy to review the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, one by one, and show that they would be meaningless in a perfect world, such as Jesus contemplated in the near future."[2]

1. Christ's View of the Kingdom of God, p. 116.

2. The Kingdom and the Messiah, p. 126.

But he rightly observes that

> "To regard His ethic as no more than an 'interim morality' is certainly to misconstrue its whole intention. It needs to be borne in mind that the separate rules and directions which He lays down do not constitute the essence of His teaching. They all run back to the one ultimate demand of inward, spontaneous obedience to the will of God, and are designed to illustrate the working of this new principle. They show how it may be observed in spirit, notwithstanding the untoward conditions of the present age."[1]

In fairness to Schweitzer, it should be repeated that he asserts a greater validity for the ethics of Jesus than many realize. In a very just appreciation, Principal Selbie wrote in the Expository Times:

> "His interpretation of the teaching of Jesus in terms of eschatology as an interim ethic has failed to command anything like general assent. At the same time, Schweitzer's position has often been interpreted in a more negative sense than he himself would allow."[2]

It might also be pointed out that, since the Kingdom has not yet come, we are still in the period of "interim-ethics", so that Jesus' ethical teachings are, even on Schweitzer's grounds, still as valid as they ever were as an ideal for conduct. But without doubt the most important argument is Schweitzer's own life. He who considers Jesus' ethic of love "conditional", and "interim-ethic", has shown by his sacrificial service what absolute validity it has for him. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

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1. The Kingdom and the Messiah, pp.126-127. He also tries to prove the absolute character of Jesus' ethical purpose by quoting Mark 13.31: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." This sentence occurs, however, in the "Little Apocalypse" which Schweitzer rejects as of doubtful authenticity.

2. Expository Times, March 1928, p. 257.

Chapter Four

CONCLUSION

1. Positive value of Schweitzer's Contribution.

The results of the two preceding chapters have been largely negative. That was bound to be the case, just as the Quest itself was largely negative in its results. For it has been our purpose to examine critically Schweitzer's methods and ideas, rather than to advance any new constructive theory. But a just appraisal of his contribution must include also the recognition of his positive accomplishments, for he did have a constructive theory to offer, and, mistaken though it may have been in many of its details, it carried scholarship a long step forward.

In the first place, Schweitzer's work was salutary in that he recognized and exposed some of the fallacies of the liberal lives of Jesus. For this, to be sure, he gave himself full credit, and he no doubt deserved the sarcasm leveled at him by Lambert in his review of the two-fold Abendmahl treatise in the Expository Times:

> "Lack of confidence in himself and his theories is not one of his qualities; and it is evident that he firmly believes that he has got nothing less than what has been called a 'Columbus egg' to lay on the critical table."[1]

He gave him full credit for his originality, but ridiculed

> "the Daniel-come-to-judgment airs with which he treats all previous investigators."[2]

Yet irritating as Schweitzer's manner undoubtedly is at times, the fallacies he pointed out are real.

1. Expository Times, June 1902, p. 398.

2. ibid., p. 400.

Among these, we have already had occasion to mention "The Four Assumptions of the Modern-Historical Solution" with which he dealt at length in the opening chapter of the Sketch. It will suffice to list them again here, as he finally corrected them:

> "1. The assumption of a fortunate Galilean period which was followed by a time of defeat is historically untenable.
> "2. Pauline influence cannot have conditioned the form of early Synoptic sayings about the Passion.
> "3. Not the ethical but the hyper-ethical, the eschatological, notion of the Kingdom dominates the Passion as Jesus conceived it.
> "4. The utterances of the Passion-idea did not occur in the form of an ethical reflection but it was a question of an incomprehensible secret which the Bisciples had not the least need to understand and in fact did not."[1]

He also pointed out the arbitrary way in which the liberals treated the text:

> "'It finally comes to this,' says Wrede, 'that each critic retains whatever portion of the traditional sayings can be fitted into his construction of the facts and his conception of historical possibility and rejects the rest.'"[2]

This was so far-reaching that

> "Modern historical theology, therefore, with its three-quarters sceptism, is left at last with only a torn and tattered Godpel of Mark in its hands."[3]

And he was most critical of the supplementary knowledge which the liberals found it necessary to employ in order to make modern sense out of the ancient events in the life of Jesus.

> "We should not, however, regard the evidence of supernatural knowledge and the self-contradictions of this Life of Jesus as a matter for censure, but rather as a proof of the merits of O. Holtzmann's work. He has written the last large-

1. Sketch, pp.81-82.

2. Quest, p. 331.

3. ibid., p. 307.

> scale Life of Jesus, the only one which the Marcan hypothesis has produced, and aims at providing a scientific basis for the assumptions which the general lines of that hypothesis compel him to make; and in this process it becomes clearly apparent that the connection of events can only be carried through at the decisive passages by violent treatment, or even by rejection of the Marcan text in the interests of the Marcan hypothesis."[1]

He has especially caustic words to level at the liberal practice of psychologizing.

> "These ingenious psychologists never seemed to perceive that there is not a word of all this in Mark; but that they had read it all into some of the most contradictory and inexplicable facts in the Gospels, and had thus created a Messiah who both wished to be Messiah and did not wish it, and who in the end, so far as the people were concerned, both was and was not the Messiah."[2]

It is a distinct disappointment, therefore, to discover that Schweitzer should prove guilty of all of these practices when necessary to his own theory. But at least he has pointed them out as fallacies.

Schweitzer's greatest contribution, however, has been his rediscovery and reemphasis of the eschatological elements in the Gospels. These were, up to his time, largely neglected, because scholars did not know how to make use of them. Schweitzer started with them, accepting them at their face value, and took it for granted that they meant what they said. Instead of trying to find in Jesus' teachings what makes sense to us today, he tried to discover what people believed in Jesus' day, no matter how strange it might seem to us. This was, in itself, such a sensible procedure that it is quite remarkable it had not been tried before. For Jesus lived on earth in a different part of the world from us, and in a completely different period of the world's history. He also belonged to a quite different class of soci-

1. Quest, pp.300-301.

2. ibid., p. 220.

ety from most of the scholars who seek to recapture Him. Born into a poor home, He had spent many years as an artisan before becoming an itinerant preacher and healer. He had probably received the training of the synagogue school, but He had never had the leisure to become a scholar like Gamaliel or Paul, or the German theologians who wrote Lives of Jesus. There must, therefore, inevitably have been differences in His point of view from ours. And it should not surprise us, in consequence, that He should have shared with His contemporaries at least some of their eschatological views, and frequently made use of eschatological language in His teaching. At any rate, the Gospels represent Him to have done so, and we therefore require very good reasons before we have a right to reject their evidence.

Schweitzer's discussion has also proved suggestive in many of its details. Lowrie, in the Translator's Introduction to the Sketch, mentions

> "at least eight obscure points which are illuminated for the first time by the eschatological view of the Gospel history.
> 1. Jesus' use of the title 'Son of Man', - commonly in the third person and with a futuristic sense, as denoting a dignity and power which were not yet His. Jesus was the Messiah designate.
> 2. The position of John the Baptist: it was Jesus alone that discovered in him the character of Elijah "the coming One" (cf. Jn.1.21).
> 3. The conception of the Kingdom of God as a gift, to be received passively as by a little child - and yet as a thing that 'violent men' must wrest to themselves 'by force'.
> 4. The relation of Jesus' Messianic expectation to that which was current among the people. Jesus moralized the popular eschatological ideal by combining it with the preaching of the prophets. That Jesus opposed a purely moral ideal to a popular political agitation is doubly a fiction.
> 5. The significance of the Mission of the Twelve and its connection with the popular excitement which drew five thousand men into the desert by the seashore.
> 6. The significance of the Transfiguration, coming before the Confession of Peter, and explaining how the knowledge of Jesus' Messiahship was given by divine revelation.

> 7. The character of the secret which Judas possessed and was in a position to betray. Our notion that during the last days in Jerusalem every one knew of Jesus' claim to be the Christ is plainly contrary to the record. The famous disputes of those days would have taken a very different form if the question which agitated all minds was, Is He the Christ? or is He not?
> 8. Jesus' notion of the necessity of His death, His resolution to die at Jerusalem, and His conception that He was giving His life as 'a ransom for many'.[1]

And while we cannot go all the way with Lowrie in his apparent acceptance of all eight, as we have indicated in the preceding chapters, it cannot be denied that, by bringing them up and causing them to be discussed, Schweitzer has contributed greatly to our understanding of the Life of Jesus. As Selbie noted, in his article in the Expository Times, Schweitzer's work

> "greatly stimulated the process of Leben-Jesu-Forschung, and certainly cleared the ground of a good many prepossessions."[2]

Selbie noted another characteristic of Schweitzer's contribution. The Quest, he wrote,

> "at once made a great stir, not only by the range and trenchancy of its criticism, but by the originality, and even audacity of its historical reconstruction. It cut clean across the work of the liberal and religious-historical schools, and proceeded to rebuild among the ruins with fresh materials and a new foundation."[3]

Indeed, much of the value of Schweitzer's interpretation is due to his novel approach to a subject of long-standing and universal interest, and his original treatment of it. This is what makes his books so fresh and readable. Whether one agrees with him or not, one finds in his writings nothing hackneyed, nothing boring. One's attention is riveted, as in a detective mystery, by the expectation of some new and

1. Sketch, pp.35-37.

2. Expository Times, March 1928, p. 257.

3. ibid., p. 257.

startling development. And one is not disappointed. Of course, this feature is also one of Schweitzer's greatest weaknesses - in his desire to present something new, he sometimes invents entirely unwarranted theories. We have seen, for instance, how far astray it led him in connection with his three "Mysteries". There is some truth in the comment of Vincent Turner, who wrote in the Dublin Review:

> "To some extent, no doubt, like so many German scholars (again let us be frank) particularly when they are young - Schweitzer's theology, remember, is a young man's work - he preferred the pursuit of truth to truth, that is, he preferred the elaboration of a fresh idea; for such people, as Santayana put it, any idea will do as long as it is pregnant with another that may presently take its place. But this is manifestly not a complete explanation."[1]

Nor is it entirely fair. Schweitzer was prompted not so much by a passion for novelty as by acute dissatisfaction with the liberal interpretation of the life of Jesus, and a desire to replace it by something so conclusive that it would destroy it forever. That is why he made it the aim of the Sketch to restore the heroic greatness of Jesus,[2] and why he insisted in seeking truth for its own sake.[3] He was hindered in the first of these by the assumption which he held in common with the liberals that Jesus must be historically explained in purely human terms. To make Jesus the victim of an obsession, however magnificent, is hardly to magnify Him. And he failed in the second because of his tendency to mistake ingenuity for truth. Nevertheless, his reconstruction is built upon a solid foundation of eschatological

1. Dublin Review, March 1944, p.65. The reference is to Santayana's Egotism in German Philosophy, ch.XII.

2. Sketch, p. 274.

3. In My Life and Thought, p. 65, he quotes II Cor. 13.8: "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."

truth, however ungainly the superstructure. Sufficient evidence of this is the fact that since the Quest appeared, no thorough scholar has dared to ignore the eschatological issue. Not all agree with him, especially in details, and indeed there are some of his more extreme points with which none agree. On the other hand, every one must start with the fact of Jesus' eschatology, however he may explain it. This is Schweitzer's positive contribution.

And, we might add, it is a most timely contribution. For eschatology is needed in today's changing world as it was not needed forty years ago when Schweitzer wrote. The Decay of Civilisation of which he wrote has not been followed by the necessary Restoration. A new horde of barbarians is overrunning the civilized world as Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar overran Israel and Judah, as Alexander and Pompey overran the ancient East, and as Attila and his hosts finally overran Rome. In such circumstances, faith in a Kingdom of God developed by human effort is not adequate. But now that we can see that humanistic Christianity has not proved capable, we need faith in a Kingdom such as Jesus expected, as a supernatural gift from God.

2. Summary of results.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer's Eschatological Interpretation of the Life of Jesus has proved a most interesting study. For one thing, it is the work of an outstanding Christian scholar, who is known for his achievements in four distinct fields: philosophy, theology, music, and medicine, the latter as a missionary to the neglected natives of Africa. Then, too, it is the work of a comparatively young man, for his first interest in it was awakened during his first year at the University,

and he had brought it to practical completion with the publication of the Quest at the age of 31. It is also a work on a subject of universal interest, for it deals with the life and work of Him whom millions recognize as their Saviour and Lord. It is a revolutionary work, claiming, with some justice, to discredit a whole school of theological interpretation, and turn research into a new direction. It is the working out of an intriguing hypothesis, that Jesus was dominated by the eschatological expectations of His time, and that this explains the problems and riddles of His life. It is a fascinating work to read, because of the originality of the views expressed, the ingenuity with which problems are attacked, and the remarkable variety and aptness of the frequent metaphors. It is a work of more than ordinary power, for Schweitzer writes without any doubts about the consistency of his logic, or the validity of his theories. He proves a competent debater, with a gift for discrediting his opponents, and making his own presentation seem reasonable. It is a controversial work, whose consequences, such as the idea that Jesus was mistaken, or that His teachings were "interim-ethics", demand some sort of decision, either favourable or unfavourable. In all these and other ways, the working out of this thesis has been most rewarding.

Its results are decidedly mixed, however, varying from complete agreement at some points to entire disagreement with others, and reaching definite conclusions in some instances but having to remain tentative in others. For this reason it has been impossible to state the thesis in the form of a simple proposition to be demonstrated and defended. Rather it has been an exploration to determine how much of

the woodland is growing on solid ground, and how much has its roots in the swamp. The line between the two is very irregular, and at times almost indistinct. Only when the terrain rises can we be sure it is solid, and, on the other hand, only where we can actually see water through the undergrowth can we know for certain that the ground has given way. The area in between may be perilous, but it may prove strong enough to bear weight.

a. The Kingdom of God.

The surest point in Schweitzer's view of the life of Jesus is the fact that we have in the gospel records of unmistakably eschatological references. They are frequent enough, and well enough attested, to make it certain that Jesus spoke to His disciples in terms of the eschatological hopes of the Jewish nation. These took the form of an apocalyptic Kingdom, to be established in the near future, by the supernatural intervention of God's Messiah. So much is assured.

Not quite so certain is it that Jesus understood these terms in the very literal way in which Schweitzer interprets them, although it must be conceded that if they had been used in a consistently figurative sense, some indication of that fact should have survived in the Synoptic tradition.

Likewise, we dare not categorically assert, as Schweitzer does, that the Kingdom must be so wholly future and so wholly transcendent as to preclude any thought of it as presently breaking in, for in that case, it is hard to understand how the apostles and the early Church could so quickly accommodate themselves to its failure to appear at the Resurrection of the Messiah. On the contrary, it seems logical that if Jesus knew Himself to be the Messiah-to-be, He could see in

present events the Kingdom-to-be. However, in the absence of conelusive textual evidence one way or the other, and the presence of texts which would seem to support each view, we shall have to leave this point undecided.

Not so Schweitzer's theory that Jesus expected the Kingdom to come at any definite time. To be sure, He seems to have expected it in the very near future. He warned His followers to be always on the watch for it, and condemned the Pharisees who could not read the signs of the times. Passages like Matt.10.23 and Mark 9.1 are troublesome in their assertion of its early appearance, and must be given due consideration. But the theory that Jesus expected it at harvest-time, and was thrown into confusion by its failure to appear, as also the theory that He expected it immediately to follow His death, cannot be supported by textual evidence, but only by the complicated theoretical reasoning of Schweitzer's eschatological interpretation. The danger-signal here is the complete discredit it casts on Jesus' claim to knowledge of God's purposes and His own part in them.

This is all part of Schweitzer's assumption that Jesus was so dominated by eschatological ideas as to be practically indifferent to actual history, - that is to say, in less euphemistic terms, He was a deluded fanatic. That is Schweitzer's idea, not Jesus' as recorded in the gospels, and as such may be safely rejected, without denying the truth of the eschatology in general.

b. The Messianic consciousness.

The problem of Jesus' Messianic consciousness is not solved by Schweitzer. There can be no reasonable doubt that He had one, that

for some reason He identified Himself with Him who was foretold by the prophets and who was pictured by the apocalyptic writers as coming on the clouds of heaven. The fact that Jesus called Himself the Son of Man, rather than the Son of David or the Son of God or the Servant of the Lord, although all these were also Messianic terms, is pretty conclusive proof on this point, despite Lietzmann. The fact also that the disciples called Him the Christ although His earthly life and death gave them little reason to do so, seems to indicate that they thus understood His claims.

This last fact must, however, tell against Schweitzer's insistence that the Messiahship was considered as wholly future and wholly transcendent. To the disciples, Jesus was Christ by virtue of His death and resurrection, at least as much as by the expectation that He would one day return to reign in the still-future Kingdom. To be sure, this last thought was part of their belief, but they did not speak of Jesus as Christ-to-be, or as "Christ" in inverted commas. So while Jesus' use of the term Son of Man certainly seems to point to the future Kingdom, as Schweitzer claims, it is not impossible for Him to have included in it some more present meaning of His Messianic consciousness as well, or for His disciples to have learned it from Him.

How Jesus came to think of Himself as Messiah, Schweitzer cannot tell us. He falls back on the "ecstatic" experience at the Baptism, a theory he inherited from his liberal predecessors, who got it from Mark. This is, indeed, the generally accepted explanation among most scholars of the "historical" persuasion who refuse to allow the gospel suggestions of a supernatural origin for it, based either on a miraculous nativity (Matthew and Luke) or a pre-existence of Christ (John).

As to how Jesus divulged this "mystery", Schweitzer has a definite theory, based on phenomena of the gospel record which were under discussion at the time he wrote. Jesus does seem to have preferred that men should discover His Messiahship for themselves, and to have enjoined secrecy upon those who did discover it, rather than to have laid public claim to it in the Johannine fashion. On the other hand, to state categorically, as Schweitzer does, that no man could recognize Him as the Messiah, because the latter was conceived of in wholly future terms, is to go beyond the recorded facts. We cannot, to be sure, object to his placing the Transfiguration before Caesarea Philippi, because Form Criticism has taught us to doubt the connection of events in the gospels. But neither can we assert this new order of events which Schweitzer has worked out.

Schweitzer is also unnecessarily positive about the idea that the people all took Jesus for Elijah the Forerunner. The gospels suggest him as only one possibility among several. But we can grant that not every one, and indeed perhaps not many, recognized Jesus as the Messiah, even in the last week in Jerusalem.

c. Interim-ethics.

With regard to Schweitzer's theory of "interim-ethics" there is still less to regard as certain. The discovery that Jesus thought in terms of an apocalyptic Kingdom, to be established in the near future, by the appearance of the Son of Man upon the clouds of heaven, is certainly contrary to the idea that humanity, by its own efforts to live up to Jesus' ethical teaching, could expect to produce the Kingdom, as the liberals contended. In this sense, then, Schweitzer has

a right to claim to have upset the liberal view.

On the other hand, the future, supernatural Kingdom of moral perfection does not "abrogate" Jesus' ethical teachings. They may no longer be needed as a guide for conduct in the ideal Kingdom, but that does not make the principles on which they are founded invalid. On the contrary, what is righteous in the sight of God for human conduct in this world foreshadows, if only inadequately, the righteousness of the Kingdom of God, in much the same way as Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, did not abrogate the Law and the Prophets, but went beyond them to a higher standard which included them. Only in this latter sense is it correct to speak of the Kingdom as "super-moral". It is therefore misleading and inaccurate to call Jesus' teaching "interim-ethics", and to object to the term, "ethics of the Kingdom". On the contrary, they represent such a high ideal that we can only hope to achieve the perfection of which they speak in an ideal Kingdom.

Schweitzer comes much nearer the truth when he says Jesus demanded "repentance in expectation of the coming of the Kingdom." But he is going beyond the meaning of his own phrase when he sees in that "repentance" a condition which must be fulfilled in order that the Kingdom may come, and which in some sense forces its coming.[1] This sense has to be read in from rabbinical sources. Matt.11.12 is not sufficient evidence in support of it. "Repentance in expectation of the Kingdom" should be allowed to mean what it says - Jesus sought to inculcate righteousness in His disciples so that they might share in

1. This seems almost like an attempt to vindicate the liberal teaching which he had repudiated, viz., that human ethical effort could bring in the Kingdom. The difference is in the conception of the Kingdom to be achieved, rather than in the means of achieving it. Many of Schweitzer's severest critics overlook this fact, and condemn him for repudiating Jesus' ethics, a charge of which he is not guilty.

the Kingdom when it came.

d. Other points.

Closely allied to this thought is Schweitzer's conception of the atonement - that Jesus by His death expected to force the coming of the Kingdom at His resurrection. His proof text here is Mark 10.45: "The Son of Man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many." This atonement theory is one of the simplest and most appealing parts of Schweitzer's whole eschatological interpretation. Unfortunately, it depends on the same conception as the idea that the "repentance" of the disciples could force the Kingdom, and must be rejected on the same grounds. Or perhaps we should say fortunately, for if Jesus held this view, then His death was a failure because it did not bring in the Kingdom.

The sacraments, too, are eschatologically interpreted. Baptism is regarded as John's eschatological sacrament, a "seal" that the recipient will receive the Holy Spirit and escape the judgment, and thus be admitted to the Kingdom at its coming. But Schweitzer only mentions baptism in passing. He regards the Lord's Supper as Jesus' sacrament, and assigns to it much the same significance - by sharing with the Messiah-to-be elements of the Messianic meal-to-be, believers are assured of a place at the real Messianic banquet in the Kingdom. He points out that Jesus, as He celebrated it with His disciples, looked forward to drinking with them again in the Kingdom of God. Paul also mentions showing the Lord's death "till He come". So Schweitzer is right in that the sacrament has some eschatological reference. But strangely enough, although he postulates that Jesus' death was intended to force the coming of the Kingdom, he insists that the "parables" of the broken

body and the shed blood are only incidental and not the main point of the celebration. Here he goes beyond the recorded facts in the interests of his theory, and we need not follow him. The identification of the feeding of the multitude as another pre-celebration of the Messianic meal is also possible but very doubtful, in value as well as in truth.

From the above discussion it will appear that there is indeed a kernel of truth in Schweitzer's interpretation - Jesus did expect the Kingdom to come in an eschatological sense, and He somehow identified Himself with the coming Messiah. But in order to enforce these facts, and to bring the record of Jesus' life into harmony with them, he has felt called upon to make many suppositions and explanations which are more ingenious than true. His work is chiefly valuable for having advanced and championed the eschatology of Jesus at a time when it was in disrepute. And many of his discussions of details are helpful in that they stimulate fresh thought about them. But he has carried his interpretation to unwarranted extremes. Probably the best judgment that could be passed on his work is his own verdict on Strauss: "Who ever discovered a true principle without pressing its application too far?"[1]

1. Quest, p. 85.

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